三国志 38

張飛の智略

横山光輝

希望コミックス 115

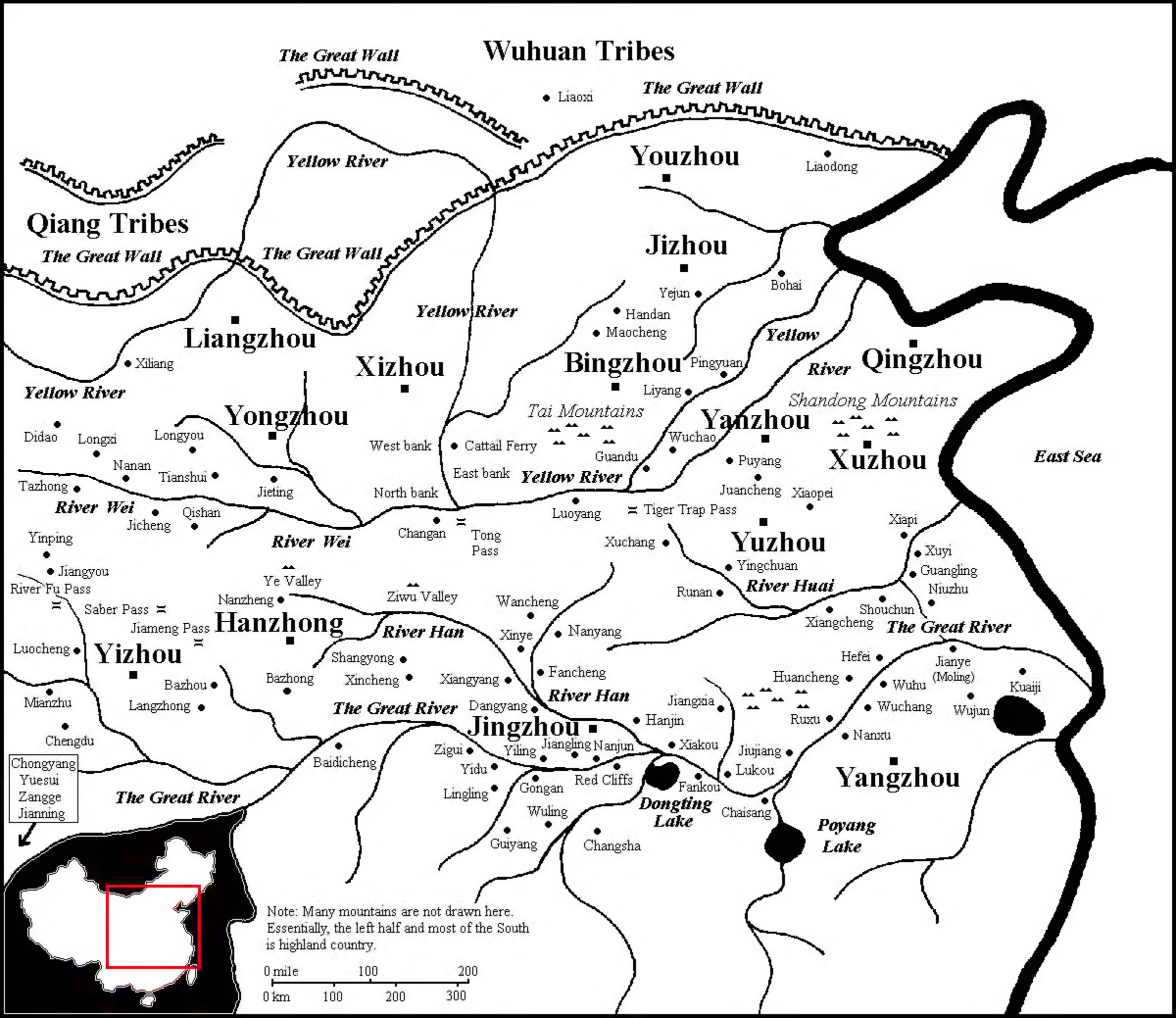
SANGOKUSHI

38

ZHANG FEI'S CUNNING

ZHANG FEI YIDE

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

MAJOR CHARACTERS OF SANGOKUSHI

CAI MAO:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU BIAO, WHO BECAME THE SUPREME ADMIRAL OF WEI'S NAVY WHEN JINGZHOU SURRENDERED TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 25, HE IS FRAMED BY ZHOU YU'S PLOT AND THUS EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. HAVING BECOME THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, HE HAS RELEGATED EMPEROR XIAN AS A MERE PUPPET RULER.

CAO REN:
YOUNGER COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL.

CAO REN:
COUSIN OF CAO CAO AND NOW HIS LOYAL GENERAL. PORTRAYED AS BRAVE BUT HOT-TEMPERED IN THE STORY.

CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.

CHENG YU:
IMPORTANT AND LOYAL STRATEGIST SERVING CAO CAO.

CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.

DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.

DIAO CHAN:
A SLAVE GIRL OF WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.

DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.

DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.

EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS AND SHE ROSE TO BECOME THE EMPRESS, UTILIZING RUTHLESS MEANS. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY DONG ZHUO WHEN HE CAME TO POWER.

FA ZHENG:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG, BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI DURING HIS CONQUEST OF SHU. HE IS ONE OF LIU BEI'S KEY STRATEGISTS.

GAN NING:
FORMER-PIRATE WHO IS NOW A FIRECE GENERAL OF WU.

GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING, WHO WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO FOR KILLING HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

GUAN PING:
GUAN YU'S ADOPTED SON AS OF VOLUME 19.

GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. HE IS AS FIERCE AS GUAN YU BUT IS MORE RESTRAINED AND CALM IN HIS MANNERISMS.

GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

HE JIN:
ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER ROSE TO BECOME EMPRESS HE. HE IS KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS DURING THEIR POWER STRUGGLE IN VOLUME 3.

HUANG ZHONG:
AN ELDERLY WARRIOR GENERAL RENOWNED ESPECIALLY FOR HIS SKILL WITH THE BOW. FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT SINCE THE END OF V28, HE NOW SERVES LIU BEI.

HUANG GAI:
LOYAL GENERAL OF WU, WHOSE FAMILY HAS SERVED THE SUN FAMILY FOR THREE GENERATIONS.

JIANG QIN:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.

LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.

LING TONG:
FORMIDABLE GENERAL OF WU. HE BEARS A GRUDGE AGAINST GAN NING FOR KILLING HIS FATHER BACK WHEN GAN NING WAS NOT A WU OFFICER (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

JIA XU:
FORMER STRATEGIST OF ZHANG XIU, WHO PLOTTED A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, WHICH LEFT DIAN WEI DEAD. AS OF VOLUME 16, HE HAS DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR.

LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU BETRAYS THEM.

LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO SICKNESS IN VOLUME 22 AND THE CONSEQUENT SUCCESSION CRISIS ALLOWS CAO CAO TO TAKE OVER JINGZHOU.

LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A KIND AND VIRTUOUS MAN, WHO CLAIMS DESCENT FROM EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI.

LIU FENG:
LIU BEI'S ADOPTED SON. ORIGINALLY THE NEPHEW OF LIU MI, HE WAS ADOPTED UPON FIRST SIGHT BY LIU BEI WHO TOOK A LIKING TO HIM IN VOLUME 21.

LIU QI:
ELDEST SON OF LIU BIAO WHO TEMPORARILY LOSES HIS INHERITANCE OF JINGZHOU DUE TO CAI MAO'S PLOT. IN VOLUME 29, HE PASSES AWAY FROM ILLNESS AND THE RIGHTFUL OWNERSHIP OF JINGZHOU CONTINUES TO BE DEBATED BETWEEN SUN QUAN AND LIU BEI.

LIU ZHANG:
INCOMPETENT RULER OF SHU (ALTERNATIVE NAME FOR YIZHOU). HE SEEKS LIU BEI'S HELP TO FEND OFF ZHANG LU, BUT RELATIONS SOON SOUR AND LIU BEI USURPS HIS RULE OVER SHU. AS OF VOLUME 35, HE IS EXILED TO JINGZHOU.

LU BU:
ALTHOUGH REPUTED TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR, HE IS HOT-HEADED AND RARELY HEEDS WISE ADVICE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES, AND EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

LU MENG:
FIERCE GENERAL OF WU, WHO HAS TAKEN OVER LU SU'S FORCES SINCE HIS PASSING.

LU SU:
IMPORTANT MILITARY GENERAL AND ADVISOR OF WU.

MA CHAO:
A FIERCE WARRIOR WHO SEEKS TO AVENGE HIS FATHER MA TENG'S DEATH AT CAO CAO'S HANDS. IN VOLUME 35, HE ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE AND BECOMES ONE OF HIS MOST VALUABLE GENERALS.

MA DAI:
A NEPHEW OF MA CHAO WHO ENTERS LIU BEI'S SERVICE ALONGSIDE HIS UNCLE.

MA LIANG:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS. HE IS THE FOURTH YOUNGEST OF THE FIVE MA BROTHERS, AND IS NOTED FOR HIS INTELLECT AND WHITE EYEBROWS.

MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIANG AND FATHER OF MA CHAO, WHO SIGNED THE BLOOD-PLEDGE TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 30, HE IS EXECUTED FOR A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT OF CAO CAO.

MENG DA:
FORMER SUBJECT OF LIU ZHANG WHO DEFECTS TO LIU BEI, ALONG WITH HIS GOOD FRIENDS ZHANG SONG AND FA ZHENG.

MI ZHU:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS.

PANG DE:
FIERCE GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED MA TENG AND THEN MA CHAO. IN VOLUME 36, HE DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SERVICE DUE TO A TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP WITH ZHANG LU, THE LORD OF HANZHONG.

PANG TONG SHIYUAN:
NICKNAMED THE YOUNG PHOENIX (FENGCHU), HE IS A MASTERFUL STRATEGIST SAID TO BE ZHUGE LIANG'S EQUAL. AFTER ENTERING LIU BEI'S SERVICE, HE TRAGICALLY MET AN EARLY DEATH IN SHU WHEN AMBUSHED BY ZHANG REN IN VOLUME 34.

SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.

SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN, WHO TURNS THE SUN FAMILY'S FORTUNE AROUND WITH HIS CONQUEST OF THE SOUTHLANDS. IN VOLUME 19, A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT AND CONFLICT WITH YU JI CAUSES HIS BODY AND MENTAL HEALTH TO WEAKEN. HE SUCCUMBS TO DEATH SHORTLY AFTER.

SUN JIAN:
THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. HOWEVER, HIS ALLIES LIU BIAO AND YUAN SHAO TO TURN ON HIM WHEN HE TRIES TO KEEP THE IMPERIAL SEAL FOR HIMSELF. IN VOLUME 7, HE IS KILLED IN BATTLE AGAINST YUAN SHAO.

SUN QIAN:
TRUSTED ADVISOR TO LIU BEI. (HIS ROLE IS MUCH SMALLER IN SANGOKUSHI COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL NOVEL.)

SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE AND THE CURRENT RULER OF WU, THE SOUTHLANDS OF CHINA.

TAISHI CI:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU YAO BUT DEFECTED TO SUN CE IN VOLUME 11. DURING THE BATTLE OF HEFEI (VOL. 29), HE FALLS PREY TO ZHANG LIAO'S PLAN AND IS KILLED IN BATTLE.

TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG. UPON HIS DEATH, HE BEQUEATHS XUZHOU TO LIU BEI.

THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY WERE KILLED DURING THE POWER STRUGGLE WITH HE JIN IN VOLUME 4.

WANG YUN:
THE MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN THE IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHAN IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

WEI YAN:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT HAS DEFECTED TO LIU BEI ALONG WITH HUANG ZHONG IN VOLUME 28.

WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.

XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.

XU CHU:
TRUSTED BODYGUARD OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.

XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. AFTER A BRIEF STINT OF SERVICE TO LIU BEI, HE IS TRICKED INTO COMING TO XUCHANG AND SERVING CAO CAO (VOLUME 21).

XUN YU:
TALENTED ADVISOR TO CA CAO.

XU HUANG:
CALM AND COLLECTED GENERAL UNDER SERVICE TO CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.

YAN YAN:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU ZHANG BUT DEFECTED TO LIU BEI AFTER HIS CAPTURE AT ZHANG FEI'S HANDS IN VOLUME 34. HE IS NOTED FOR HIS ENERGY DESPITE HIS OLD AGE.

YU JIN:
GENERAL SERVING CAO CAO. CONSIDERED TO BE ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS OF WEI BY CHEN SHOU, AUTHOR OF RECORDS OF THE THREE KINGDOMS.

YUAN SHAO:
OLDER BROTHER OF YUAN SHU AND THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU. AFTER MANY YEARS OF WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO FOR CONTROL OF NORTHERN CHINA, HE AND HIS FAMILY ARE DEFEATED.

YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU.

ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.

ZHANG LU:
THE LEADER OF THE CELESTIAL MASTERS TAOIST MOVEMENT, AND THE RULER OF HANZHONG. IN VOLUME 36, CAO CAO CONQUERS HANZHONG BUT SPARES ZHANG LU.

ZHANG REN:
ONE OF SHU'S MOST CAPABLE GENERALS WHO PLANNED THE AMBUSH THAT KILLED PANG TONG. HE REFUSED TO SERVE LIU BEI UNLIKE MANY OF HIS COMRADES AND WAS THUS EXECUTED WHEN FINALLY CAPTURED AT THE HANDS OF ZHUGE LIANG (VOLUME 35).

ZHANG SONG:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU ZHANG WHO, UPON FAILING TO MAKE AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN CAO CAO AND LIU ZHANG, SOUGHT LIU BEI'S SUPPORT AND SWITCHED HIS ALLEGIANCE. IN VOLUME 34, HE IS EXECUTED WHEN HIS BROTHER REPORTS HIS BETRAYAL TO LIU ZHANG.

ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER SUBJECT OF YUAN SHAO BUT LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE BECOMES ONE OF LIU BEI'S MOST TRUSTED GENERALS.

ZHOU TAI:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

ZHANG ZHAO:
ELDER STATESMAN AND SUN QUAN'S TRUSTED ADVISOR. HE ORIGINALLY ENTERED SUN CE'S SERVICE ALONG WITH ZHANG HONG, WITH WHOM HE WAS REFERRED TO AS THE "TWO ZHANGS."

ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE.

ZHOU YU GONGJIN:
SWORN BROTHER OF SUN CE, AND ONE OF WU'S TOP MINDS, SERVING AS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF DURING THE BATTLE OF THE RED CLIFFS. HE RECEIVES A CRITICAL ARROW-WOUND DURING HIS NANJUN CAMPAIGN (VOL. 27) WHICH HE NEVER FULLY RECOVERS FROM, LEADING TO HIS TRAGIC EARLY DEATH IN VOLUME 30.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING:
MASTERFUL STRATEGIST AND FORMER STUDENT OF SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 21, HE YIELDS TO LIU BEI'S PERSISTENCE AND DECIDES TO BECOME HIS SUBJECT.

SANGOKUSHI (ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS)

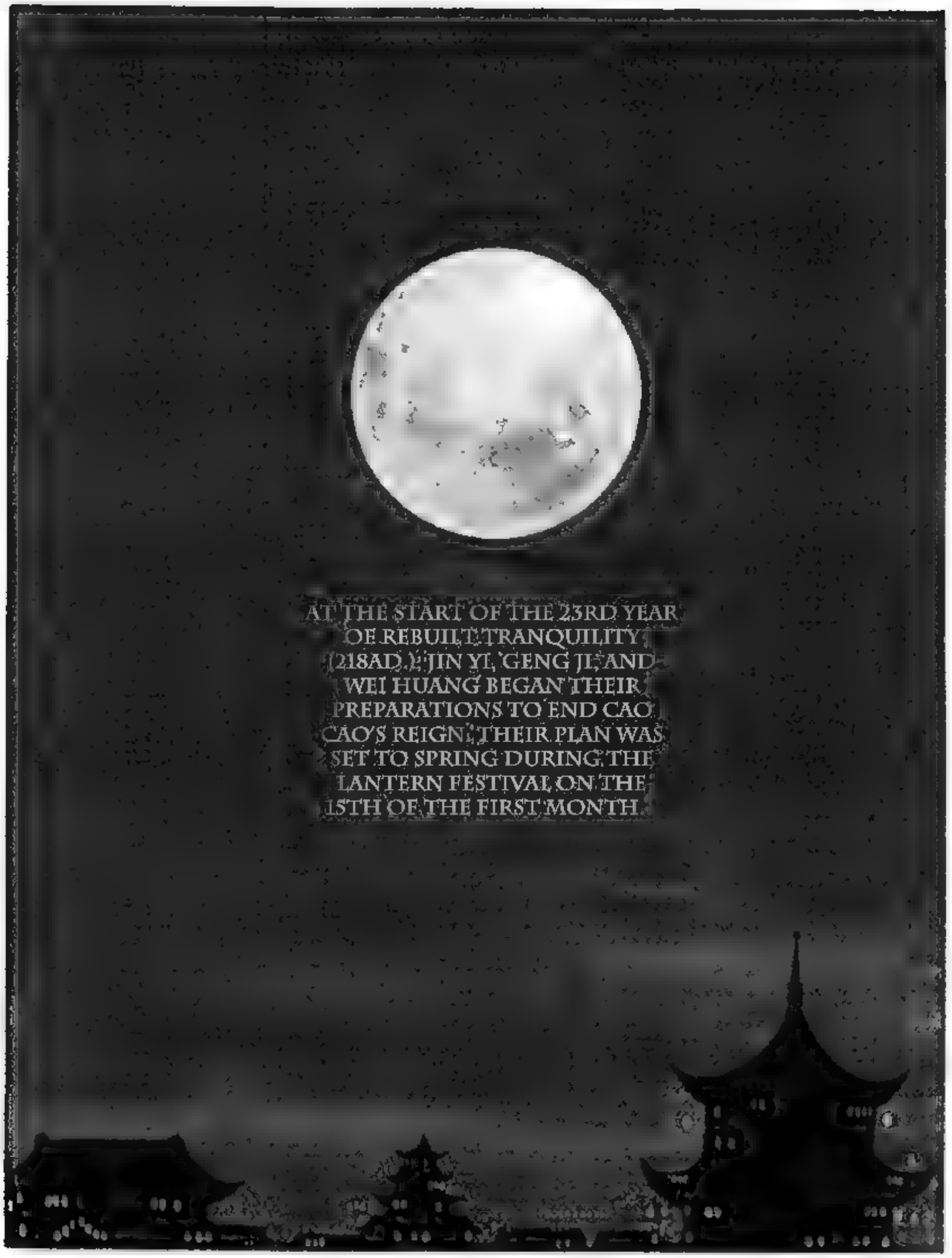
三国志

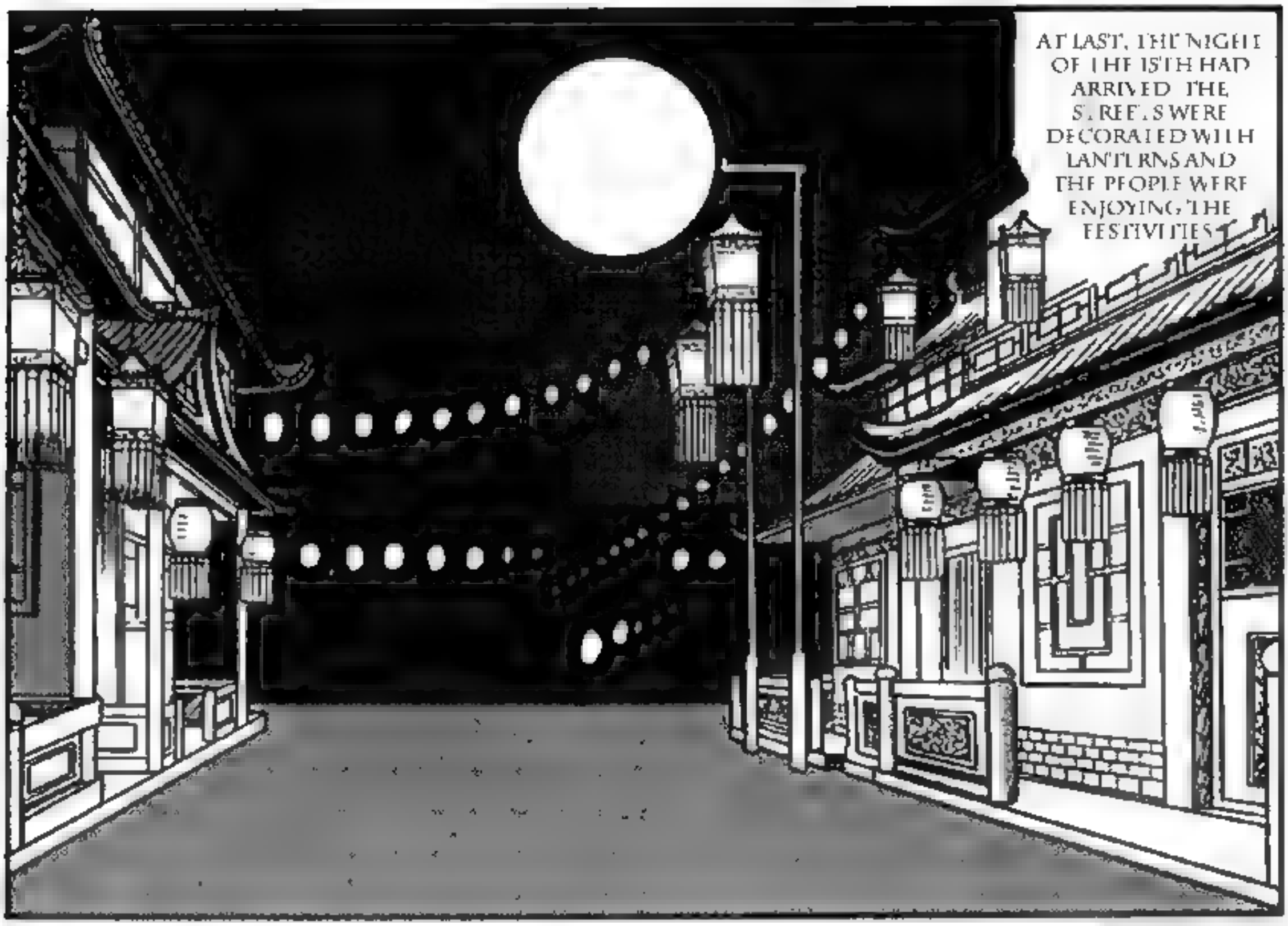
VOLUME 38
ZHANG FEI'S CUNNING

MT DINGJUN 193
EXPLOITING HUBRIS 169
OLD-TIMERS 130
SHORTCUT 108
WAKOU PASS 82
FINE WINE AT CAMP 65
STORM CLOUDS 30
LUNAR NEW YEAR 7
TABLE OF CONTENTS

（月刊『コミックトム』掲載）

LUNAR NEW YEAR


AT THE START OF THE 23RD YEAR
OF REBUILT TRANQUILITY
(218AD), JIN YI, GENG JI, AND
WEI HUANG BEGAN THEIR
PREPARATIONS TO END CAO
CAO'S REIGN. THEIR PLAN WAS
SET TO SPRING DURING THE
LANTERN FESTIVAL ON THE
15TH OF THE FIRST MONTH.


AT LAST, THE NIGHT OF THE 15TH HAD ARRIVED. THE STREETS WERE DECORATED WITH LANTERNS AND THE PEOPLE WERE ENJOYING THE FESTIVITIES.

WANG BI AND THE OTHER OFFICERS OF THE IMPERIAL GUARDS ENJOYED A GRAND FEAST AS WELL.

FOR THAT NIGHT'S REVELRY ALONE. RANKS AND FORMALITIES WERE SET ASIDE.

I'M ALREADY STARTING TO GET DIZZY.

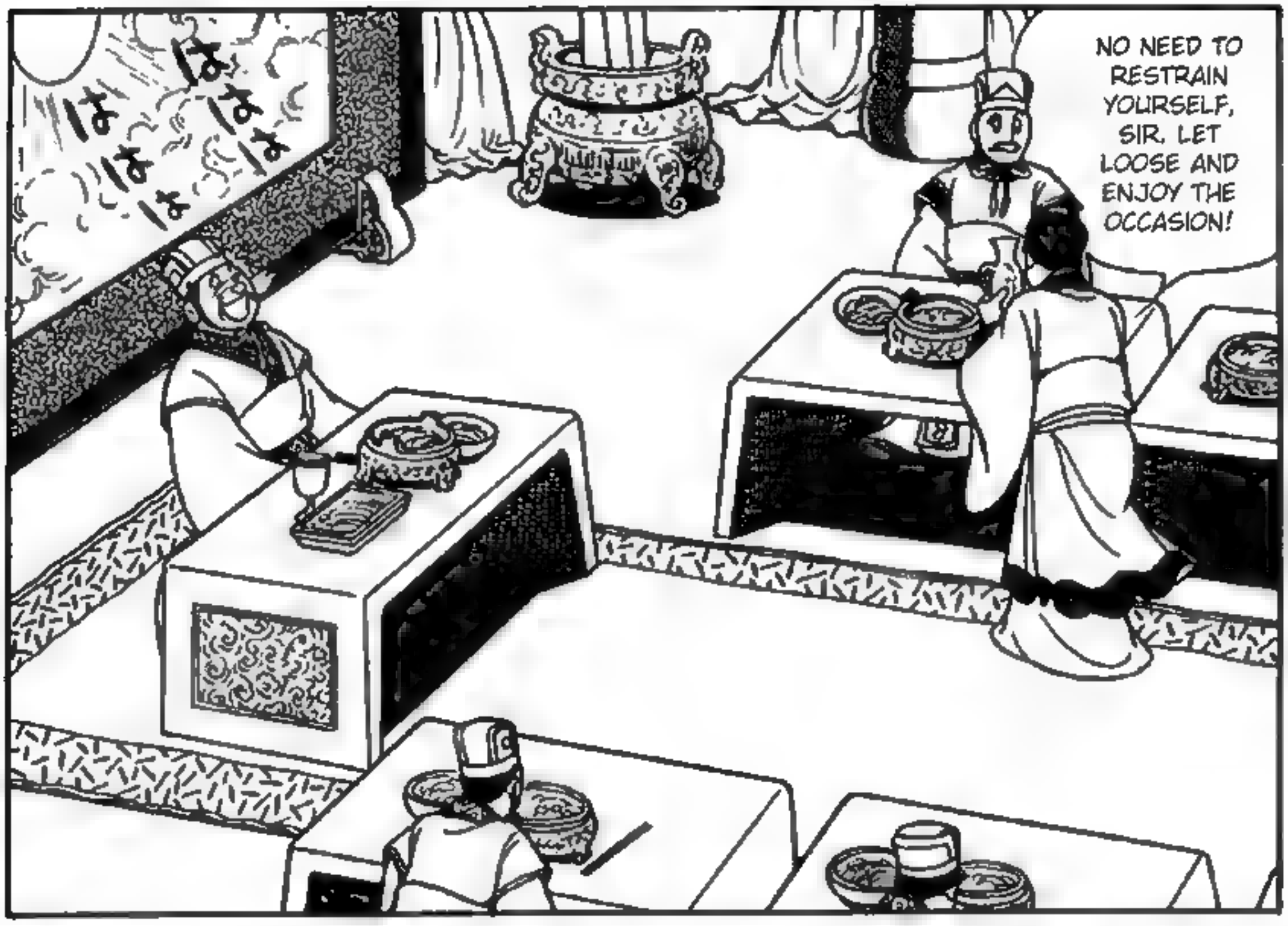
WHAT? HAD ENOUGH ALREADY, JIN YI?

UGH... I'M DONE.

DON'T BE LIKE THAT, THE PARTY'S ONLY BEGUN!

OF COURSE!

YOU THERE, POUR JIN YI ANOTHER DRINK!


NO NEED TO RESTRAIN YOURSELF, SIR. LET LOOSE AND ENJOY THE OCCASION!

EVEN FOR A NIGHT OF FESTIVITIES, THEY'RE BEING FAR TOO NOISY!
WHAT'S ALL THAT YELLING OUTSIDE?
?
HM?

A FIRE!? WHERE!?

COMMANDER WANG BI! THERE'S A FIRE OUTSIDE!

WHAT!? COULD IT BE ARSON!?

THE REAR ENTRANCE IS ON FIRE!

AGHHH!

KYAAA!

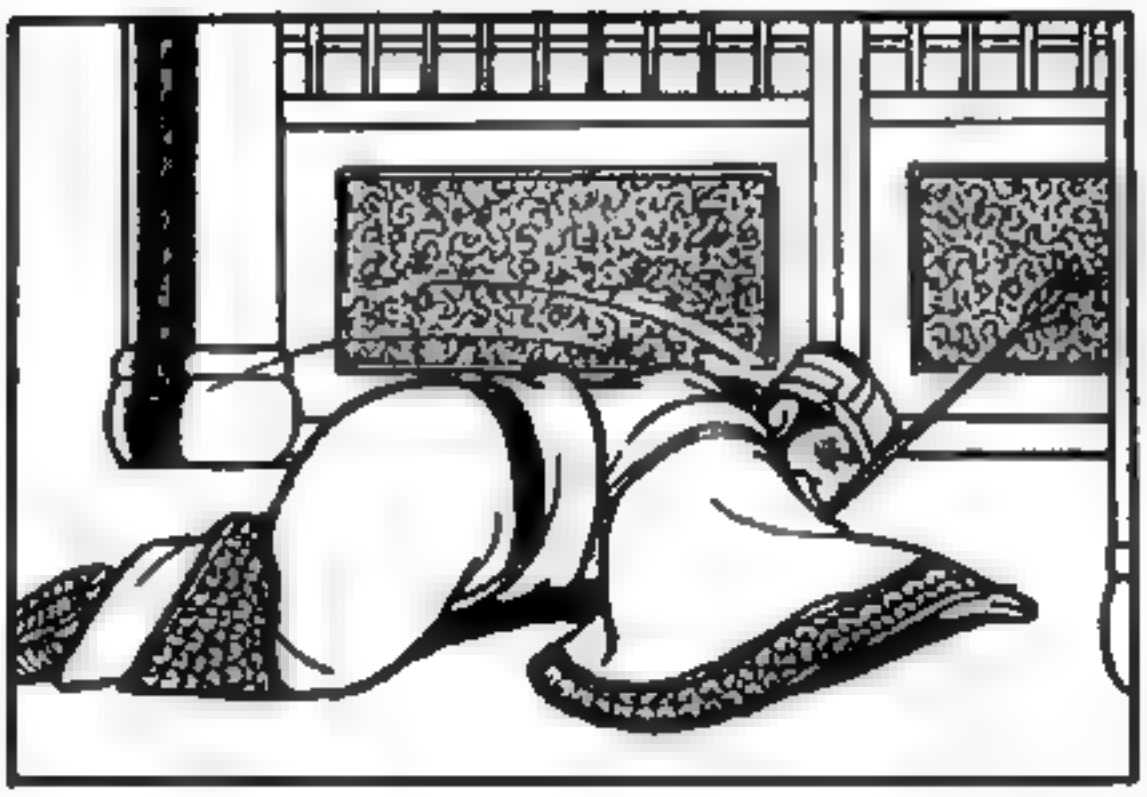
A REVOLT!?

GAHH!

ピュッ

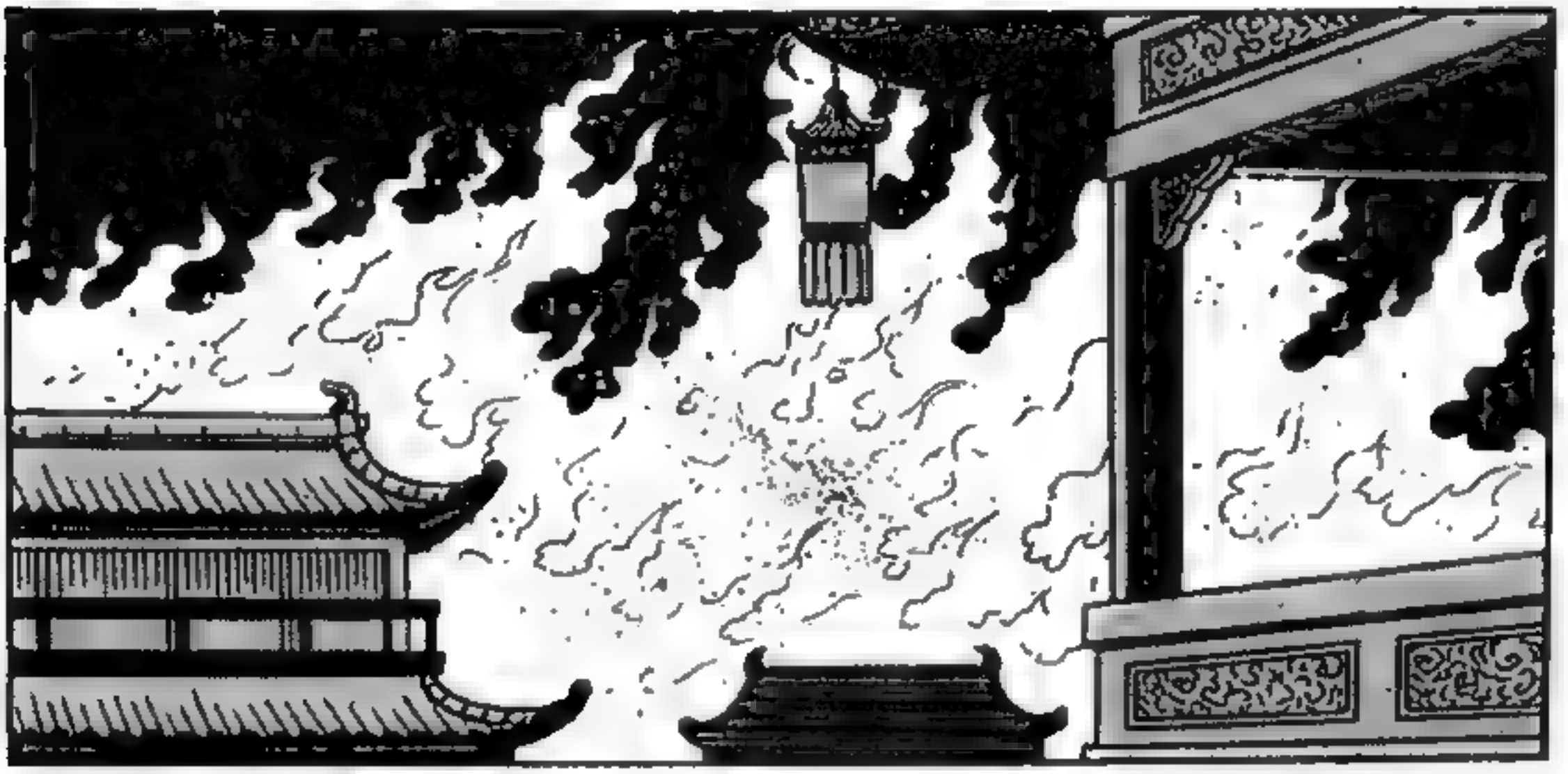
OUR OBJECTIVE IS WANG BI'S HEAD!

FIND WANG BI! PAY NO HEED TO THE REST!



THANK HEAVENS, A HORSE!

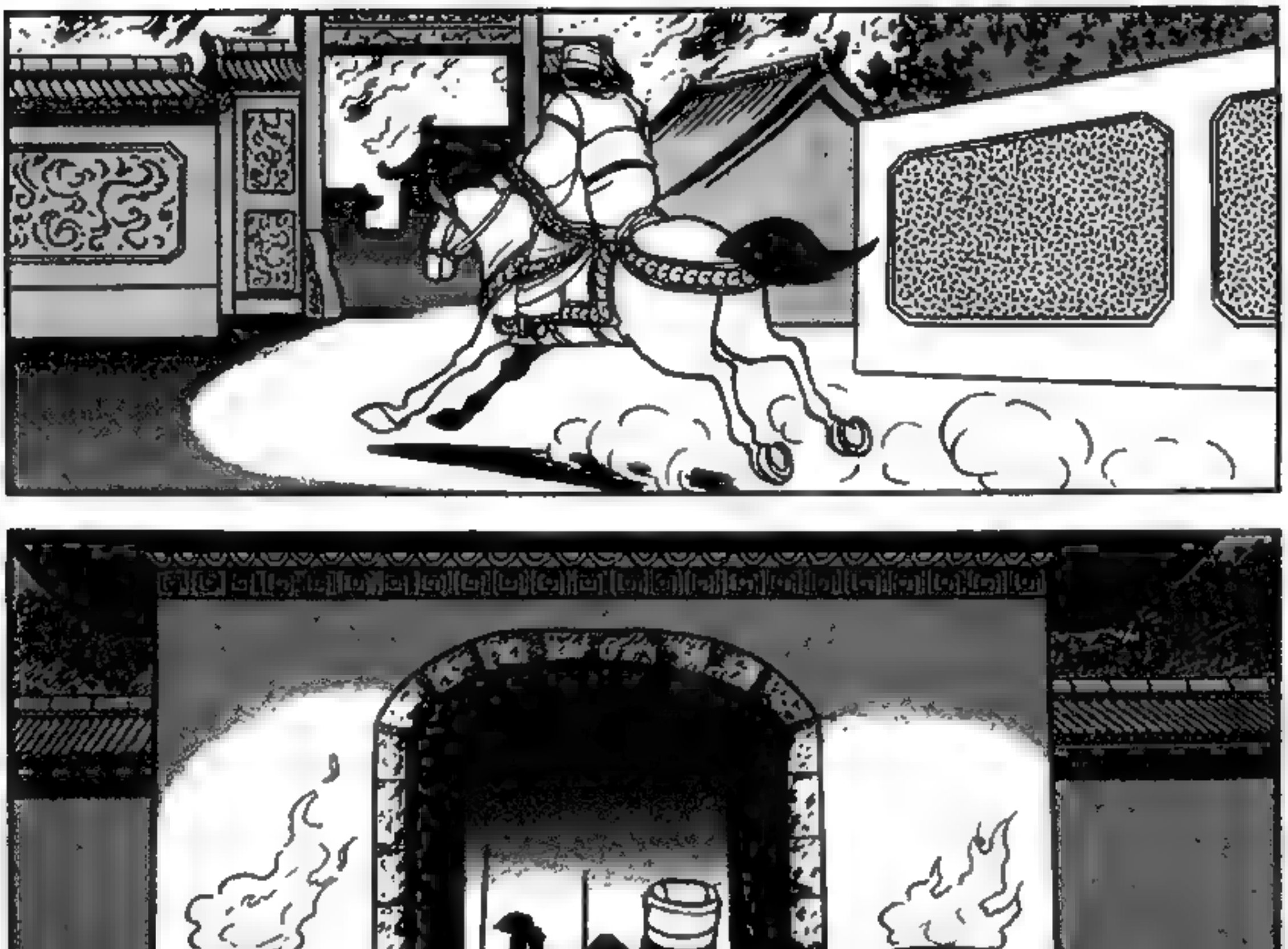
HE MUST BE HIDING SOMEWHERE IN THE INNER QUARTERS OF HIS HOUSE!
HAS WANG BI STILL NOT BEEN FOUND?



AH, THAT'S RIGHT! JIN YI'S HOUSE IS NEARBY. I'LL TAKE REFUGE THERE AND GET THIS WOUND TREATED AS WELL.

YES, THIS IS THE PLACE.

W-W-WRONG HOUSE!
BACK ALREADY? HOLD ON, I'M COMING. DID YOU MANAGE TO GET WANG BI'S HEAD?
JIN YI MUST BE THE ONE WHO PLOTTED THIS WHOLE REVOLT!
THERE'S NO TIME TO STAND AROUND HERE. I'VE GOT TO GO AND TELL CAO XIU!



I AM WANG BI, COMMANDER OF THE IMPERIAL GUARDS! I AM HERE TO SEE GENERAL CAO XIU!

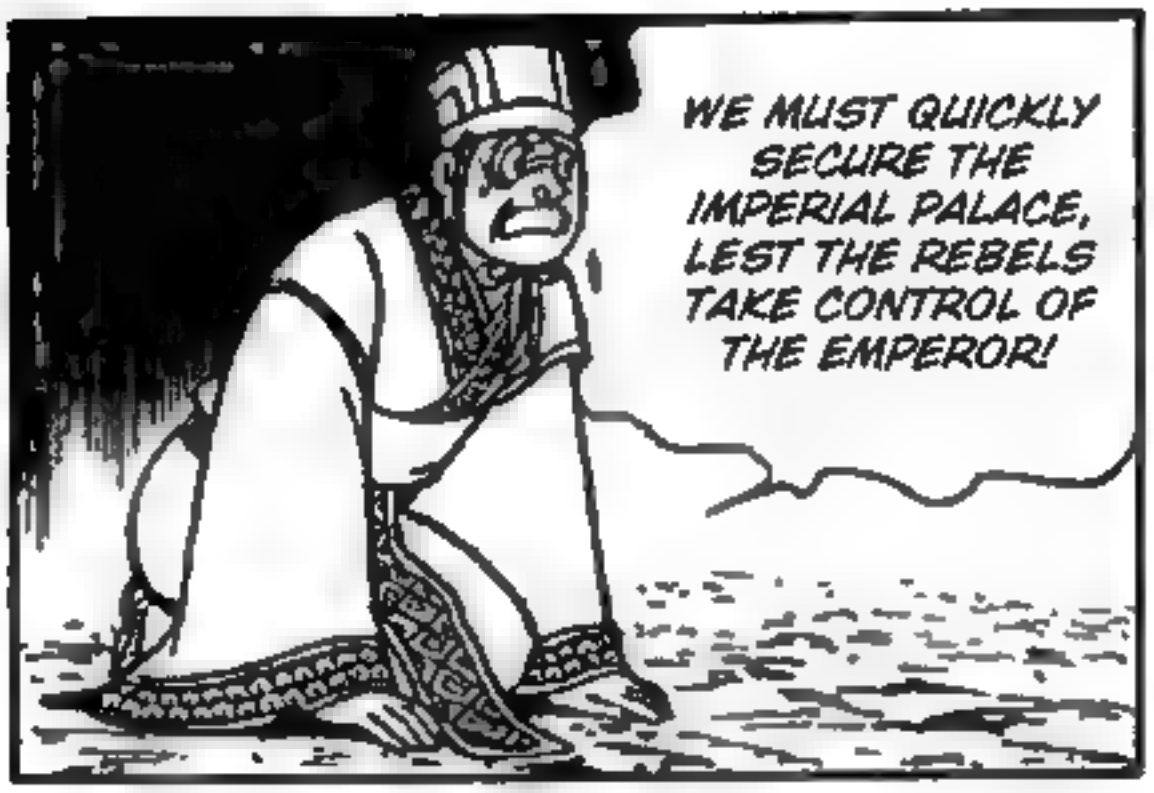
HALT! WHO GOES THERE!?

OF COURSE, SIR. I SHALL ALERT HIM RIGHT AWAY.

JIN YI'S STARTED A REVOLT!

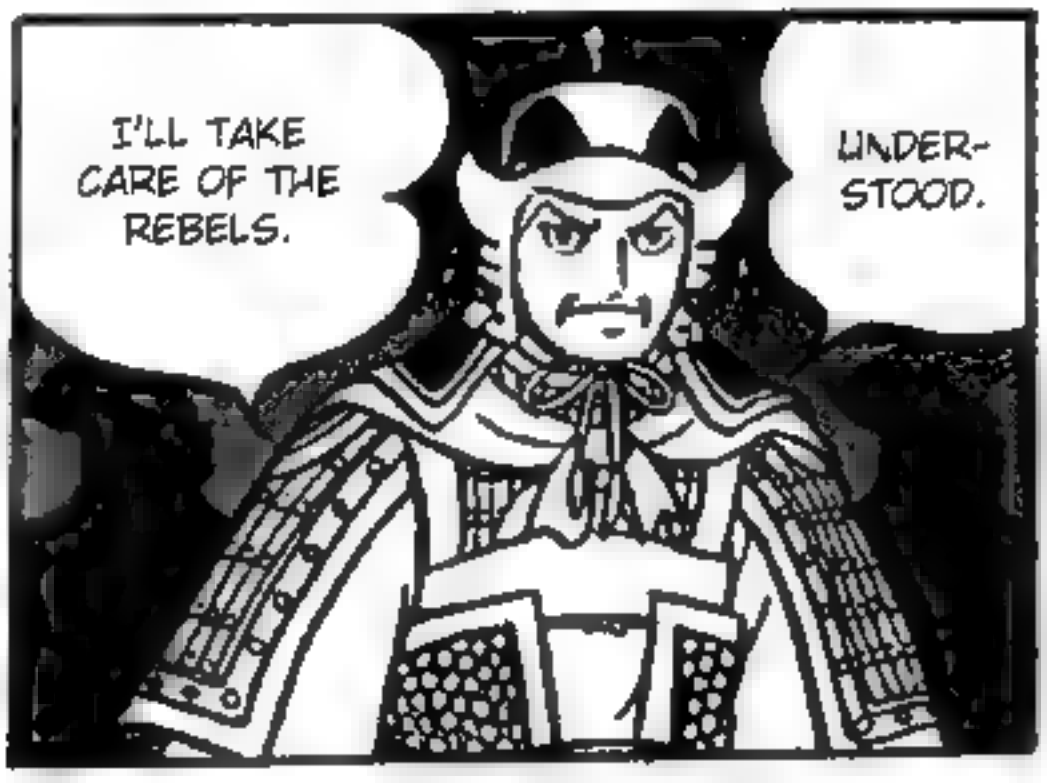
CAO XIU!

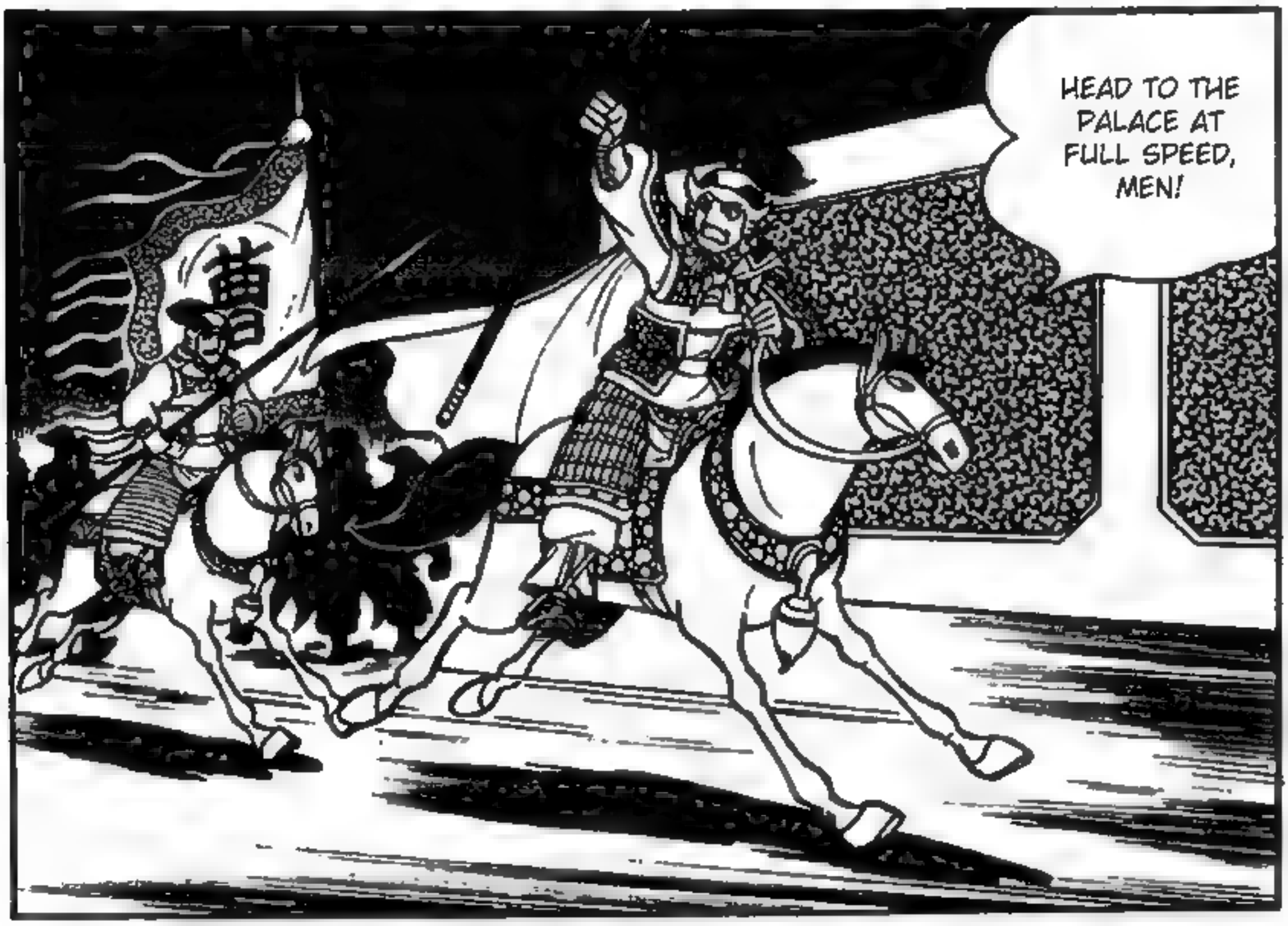
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, WANG BI?


WE MUST QUICKLY SECURE THE IMPERIAL PALACE, LEST THE REBELS TAKE CONTROL OF THE EMPEROR!

WHAT!? A REVOLT!?

YES, SIR!
YOU THERE, SEE TO IT THAT WANG BI'S WOUND IS TREATED!


I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE REBELS.
UNDER-STOOD.


HEAD TO THE PALACE AT FULL SPEED, MEN!
曹

SLAY CAO CAO AND RESTORE HAN!
SLAY CAO CAO AND RESTORE HAN!
THOSE MUST BE THE REBELS! DON'T LET THEM TAKE ONE STEP INSIDE THE PALACE!

夏侯

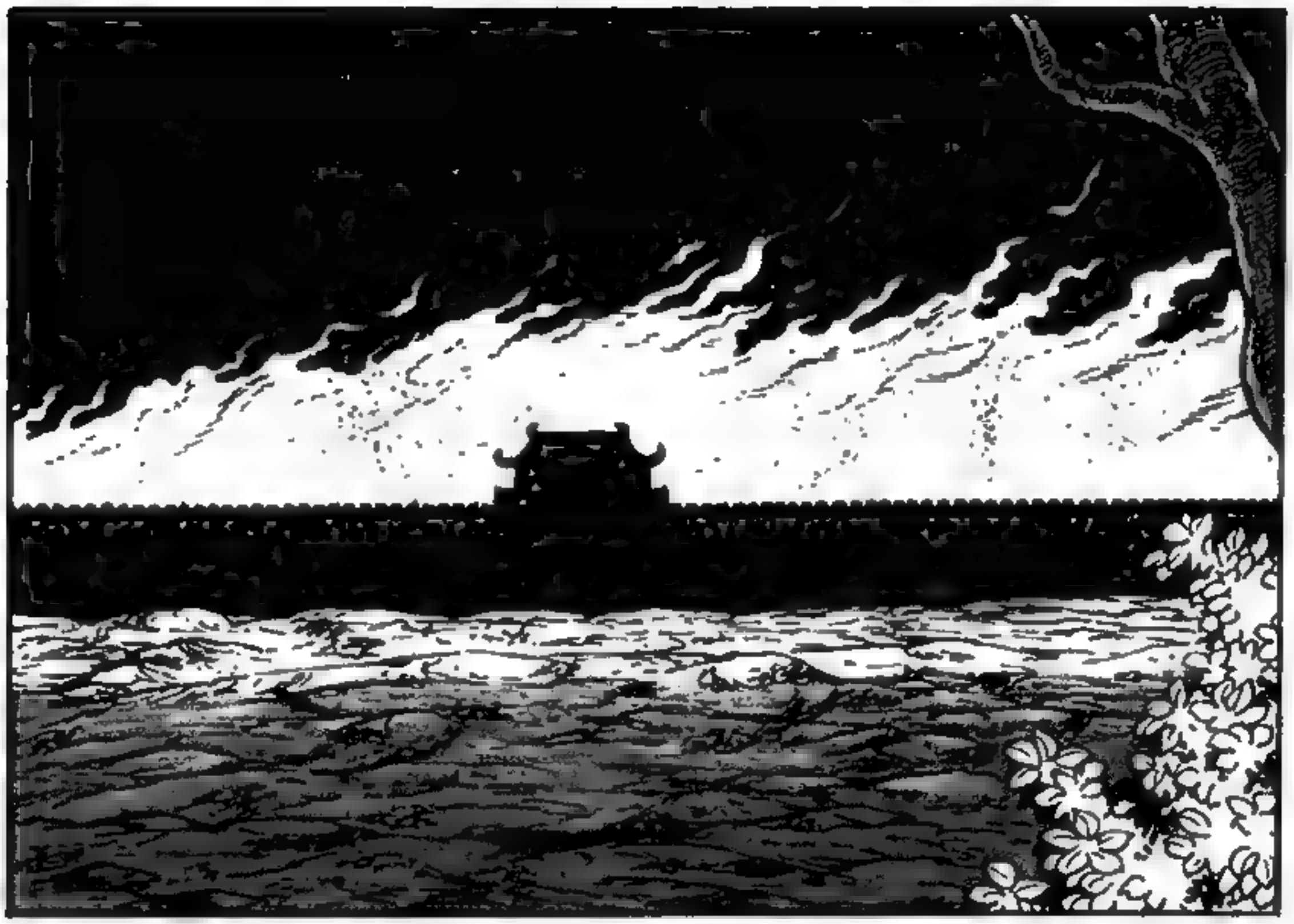
THE SKIES OVER XUCHANG APPEAR EERILY RED!

WHAT IS IT?

GENERAL XIAHOU DUN!

AHH!

WHAT!



TROOPS! HEAD INSIDE THE CAPITAL AT ONCE!

THIS IS SERIOUS...

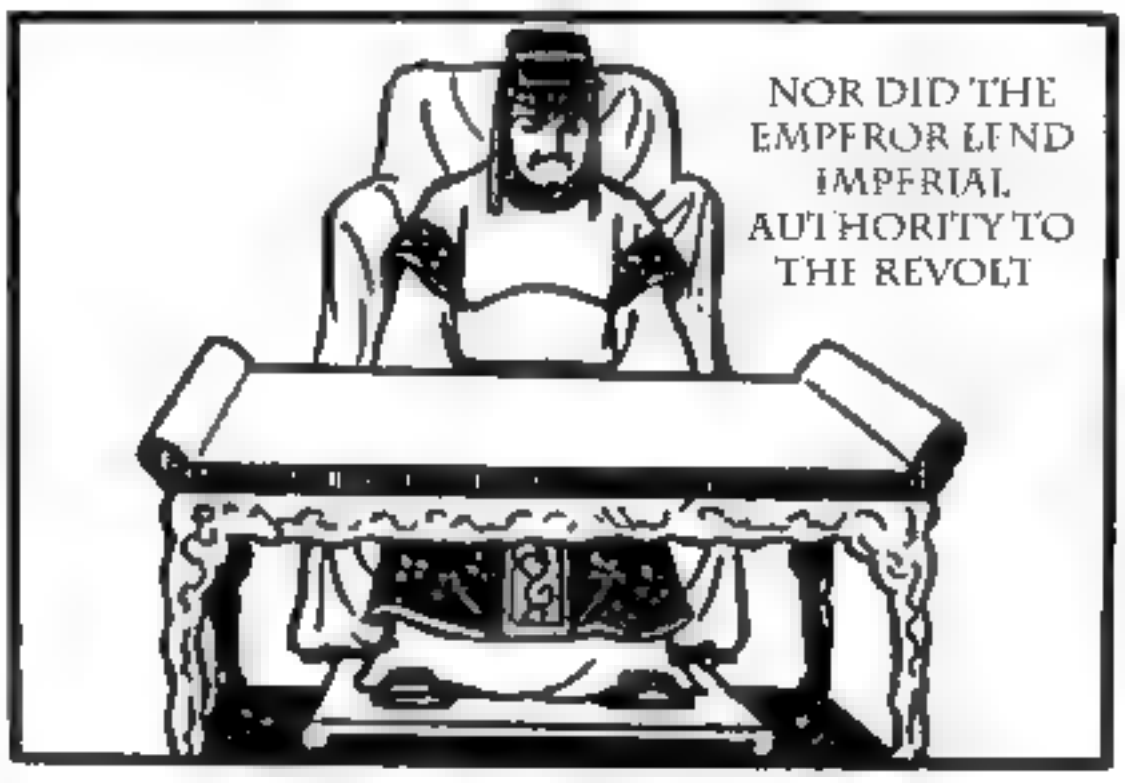
THUS, THE 30,000 TROOPS STATIONED JUST OUTSIDE XUCHANG CAME TO IMMEDIATELY REINFORCE CAO XIU'S TROOPS

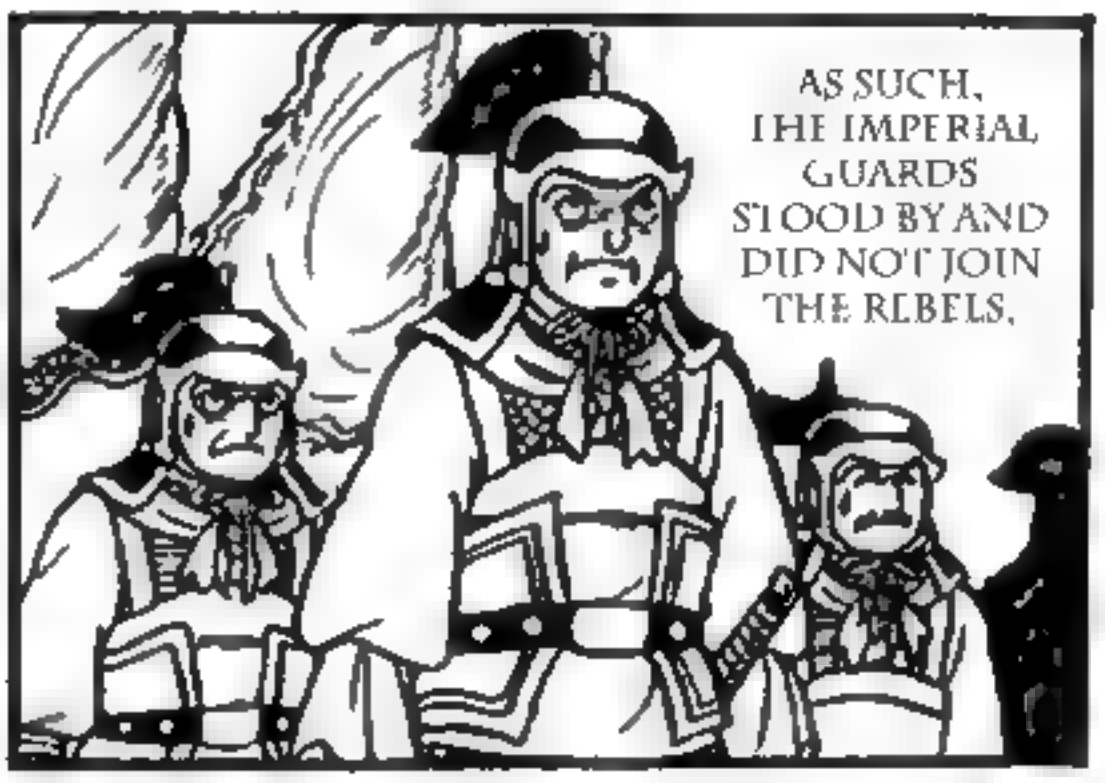
THE REBELS NOW STOOD NO CHANCE.

JIN YI, WEI HUANG, AND GENG JI'S PLAN HINGED UPON GETTING THE EMPEROR TO ISSUE AN IMPERIAL EDICT CALLING FOR CAO CAO'S EXPRESS REMOVAL AND THEN AWAIT LIU BEI'S HELP WHILE THE IMPERIAL GUARDS HELD OUT IN XUCHANG

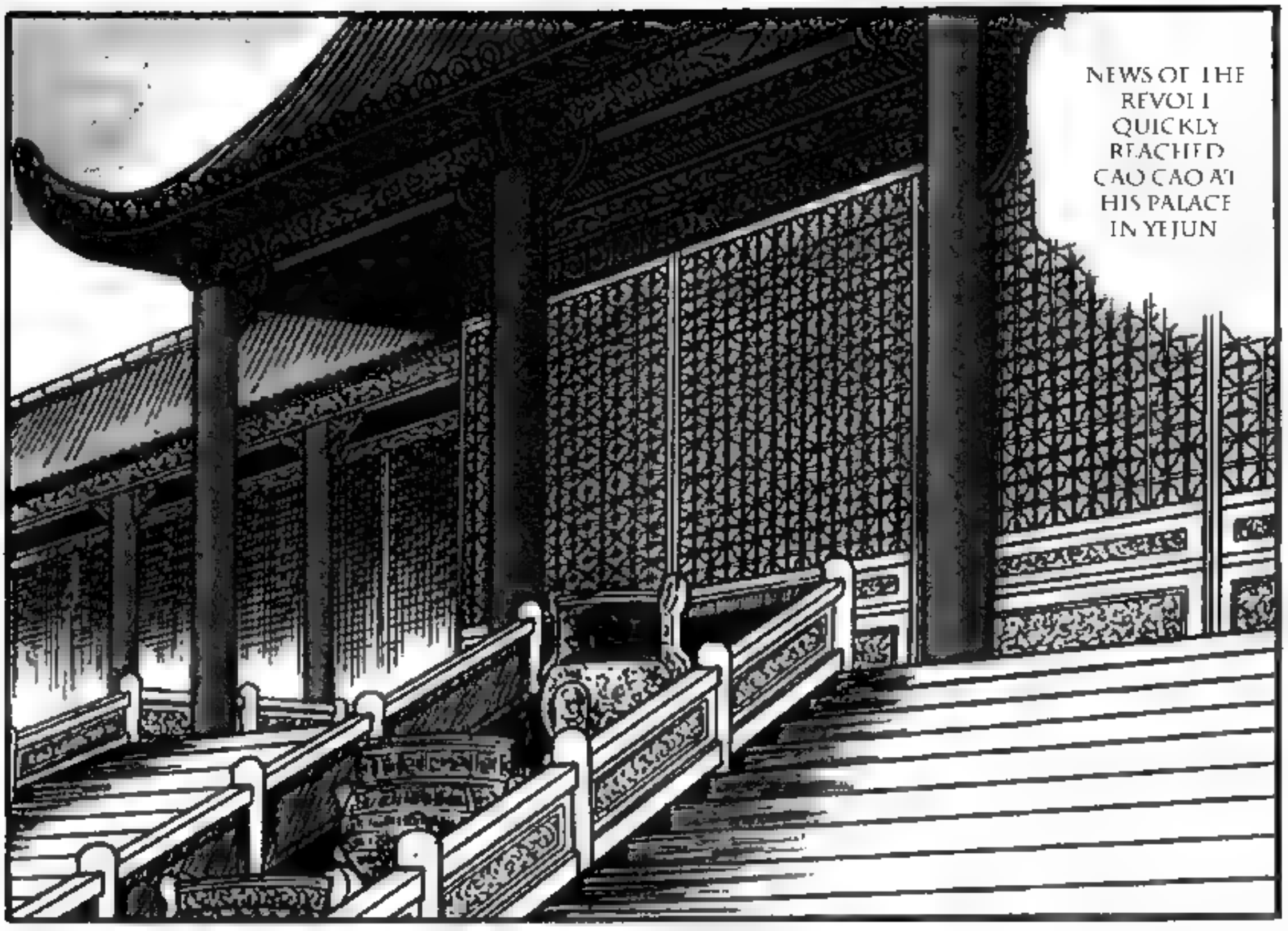
BUT CAO XIU'S QUICK RESPONSE HAD PREVENTED THE REBELS FROM STEPPING FOOT INSIDE THE PALACE.

夏
AND XIAHOU DUN'S REIN FORCEMENTS COMPLETELY TURNED THE TIDE AGAINST THE REBELS


NOR DID THE EMPEROR LEND IMPERIAL AUTHORITY TO THE REVOLT


AS SUCH, THE IMPERIAL GUARDS STOOD BY AND DID NOT JOIN THE REBELS.

SURROUNDED AND WITH NO ALLIES, THE REBELS WERE QUICKLY ROUTED

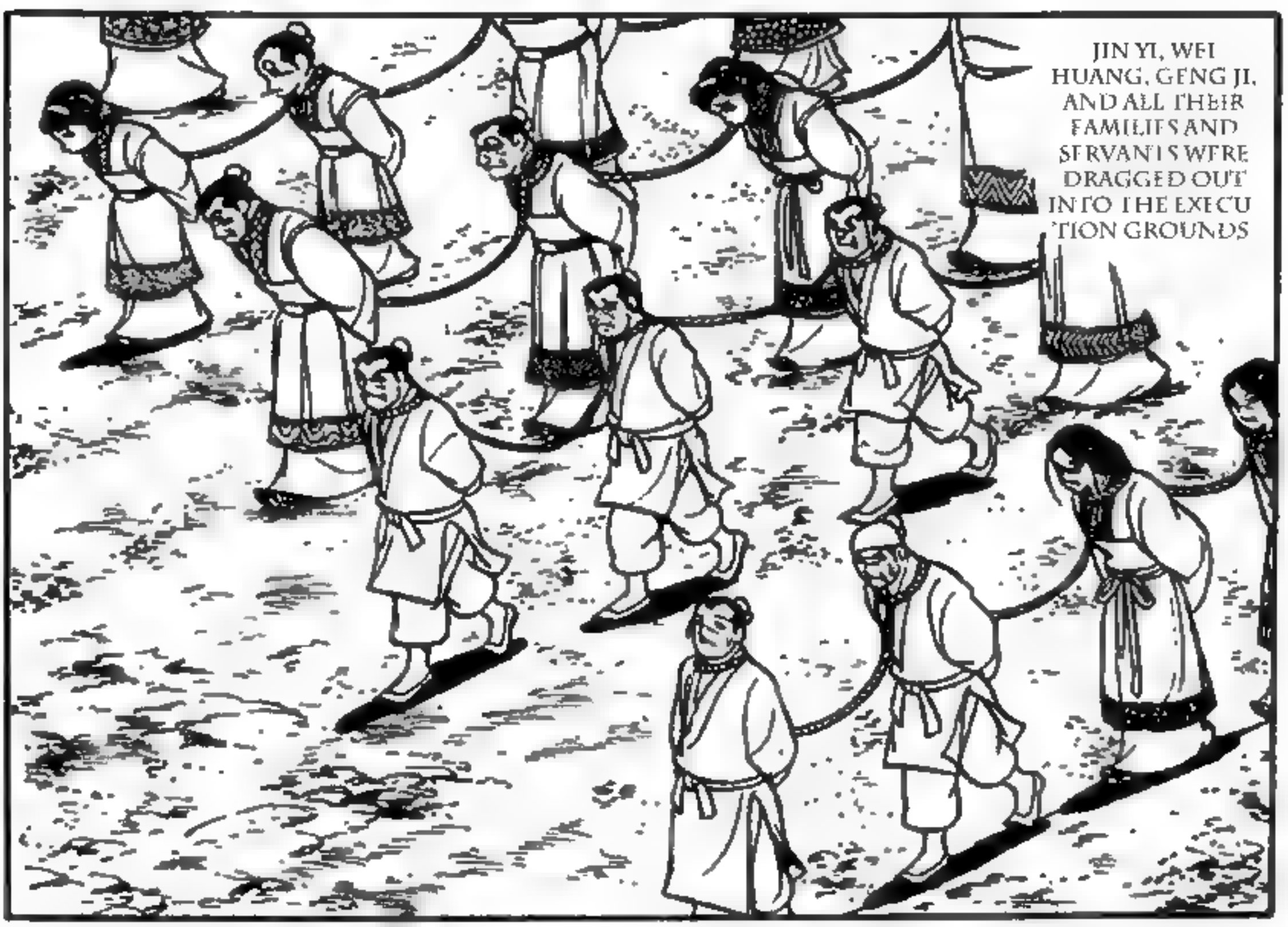

NEWS OF THE REVOLT QUICKLY REACHED CAO CAO AT HIS PALACE IN YEJUN

JIN YI, WEI HUANG, AND GENG JI HAVE ALL BEEN ARRESTED.
AND WHAT OF THE RINGLEADERS?

I WILL SHOW NO MERCY TO THOSE WHO DEFY MY WILL!
GOOD. THEY AND THEIR FAMILIES ARE ALL TO BE SUMMARILY EXECUTED!

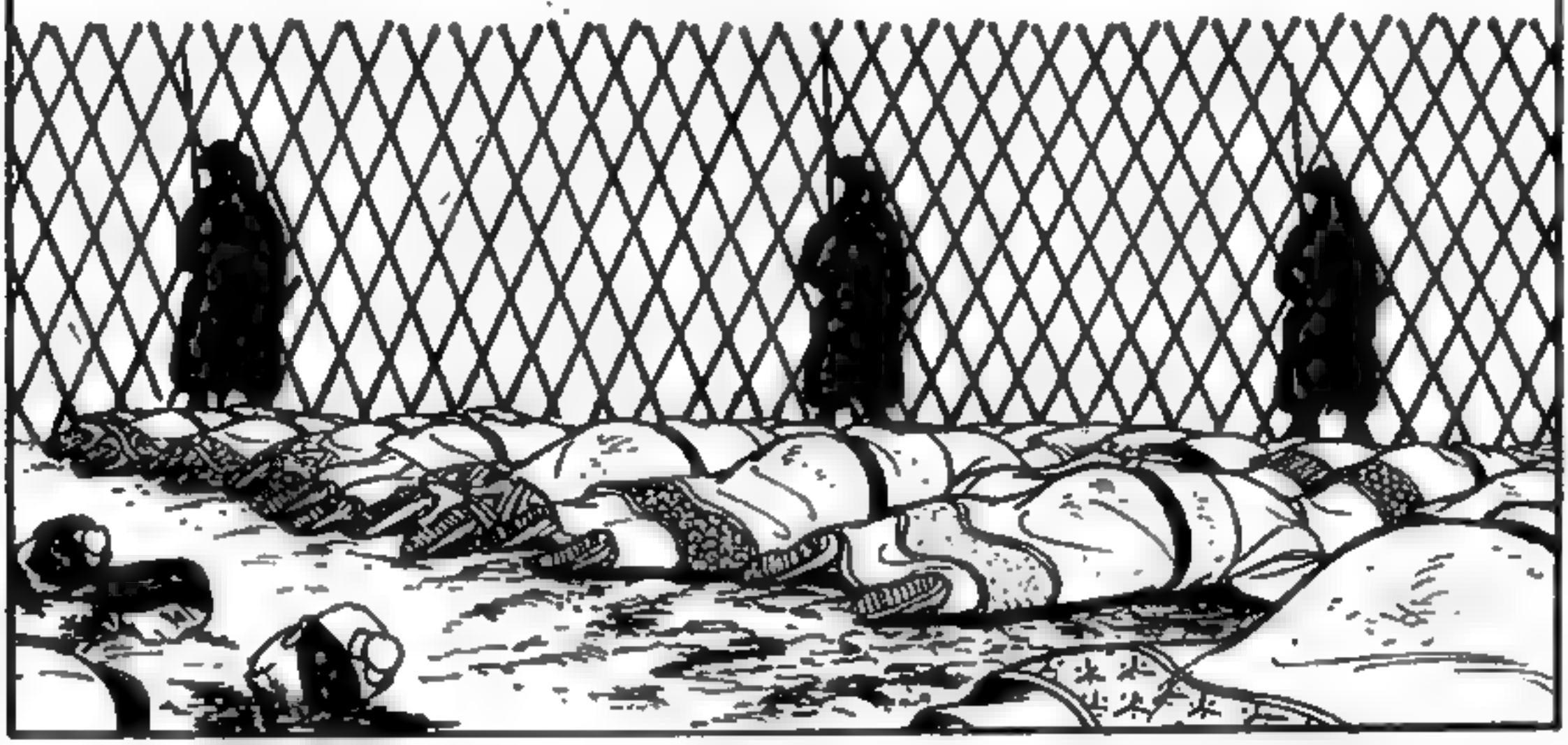
IT'S JUST AS GUAN LU HAD PREDICTED. HAD I WENT OFF TO HANZHONG WITH MY ARMY, THINGS MAY HAVE TURNED OUT BADLY...

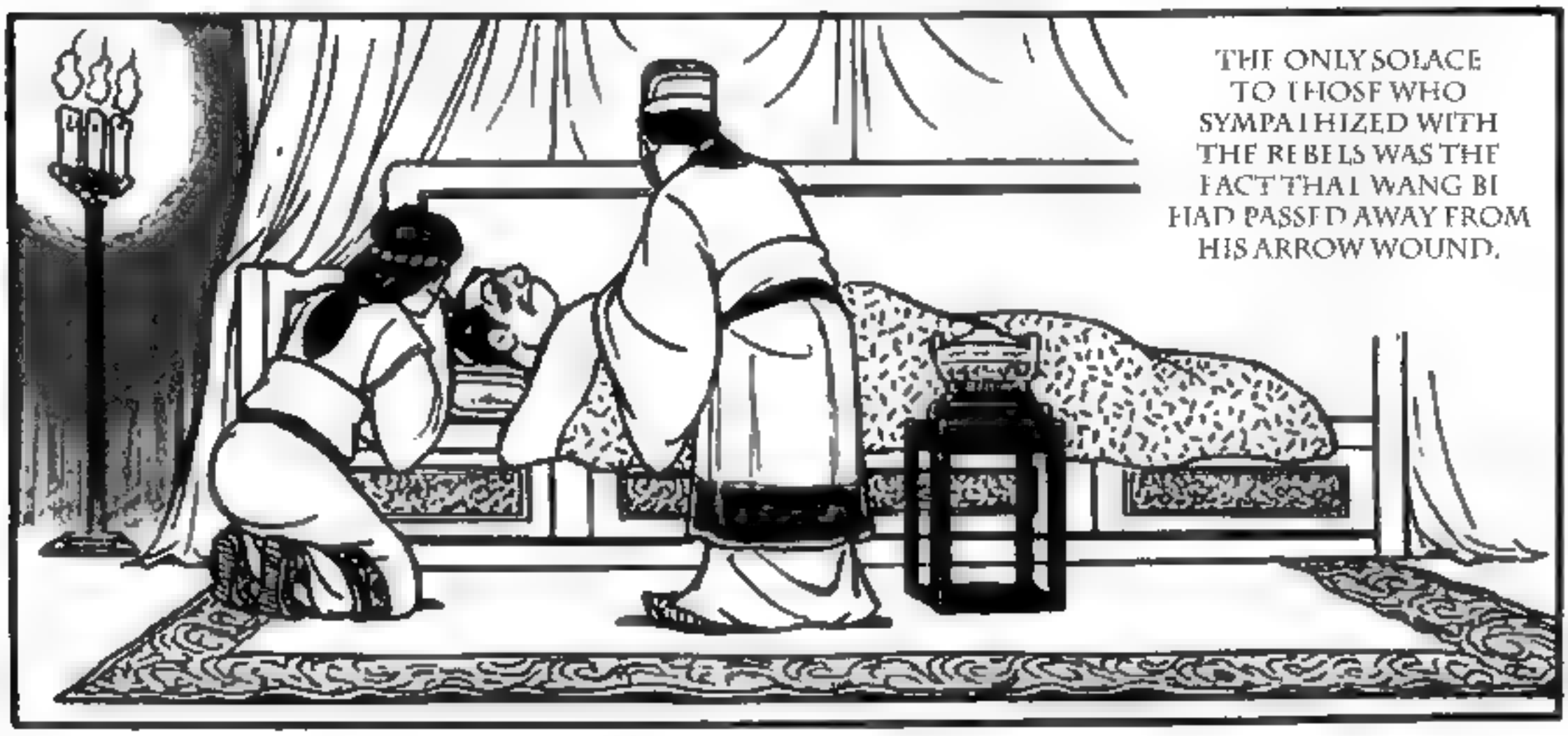
YES, SIR.


JIN YI, WEI HUANG, GENG JI, AND ALL THEIR FAMILIES AND SERVANTS WERE DRAGGED OUT INTO THE EXECU TION GROUNDS

ONE AFTER ANOTHER, THEIR HEADS ROLLED ACROSS THE EARTH, STAINING IT BLOOD-RED.

THE GRISLY SCENE HORRIFIED THE CITIZENS OF XUCHANG.





YEJUN

GUAN LU, YOUR PREDICTION HIT ITS MARK ONCE AGAIN. HAD I SET OFF TO HANZHONG FOR MY CAMPAIGN, THE SPARK OF REBELLION COULD HAVE BECOME A GREAT CONFLAGRATION THAT COULD NOT HOPE TO BE EXTINGUISHED IN ONE NIGHT.

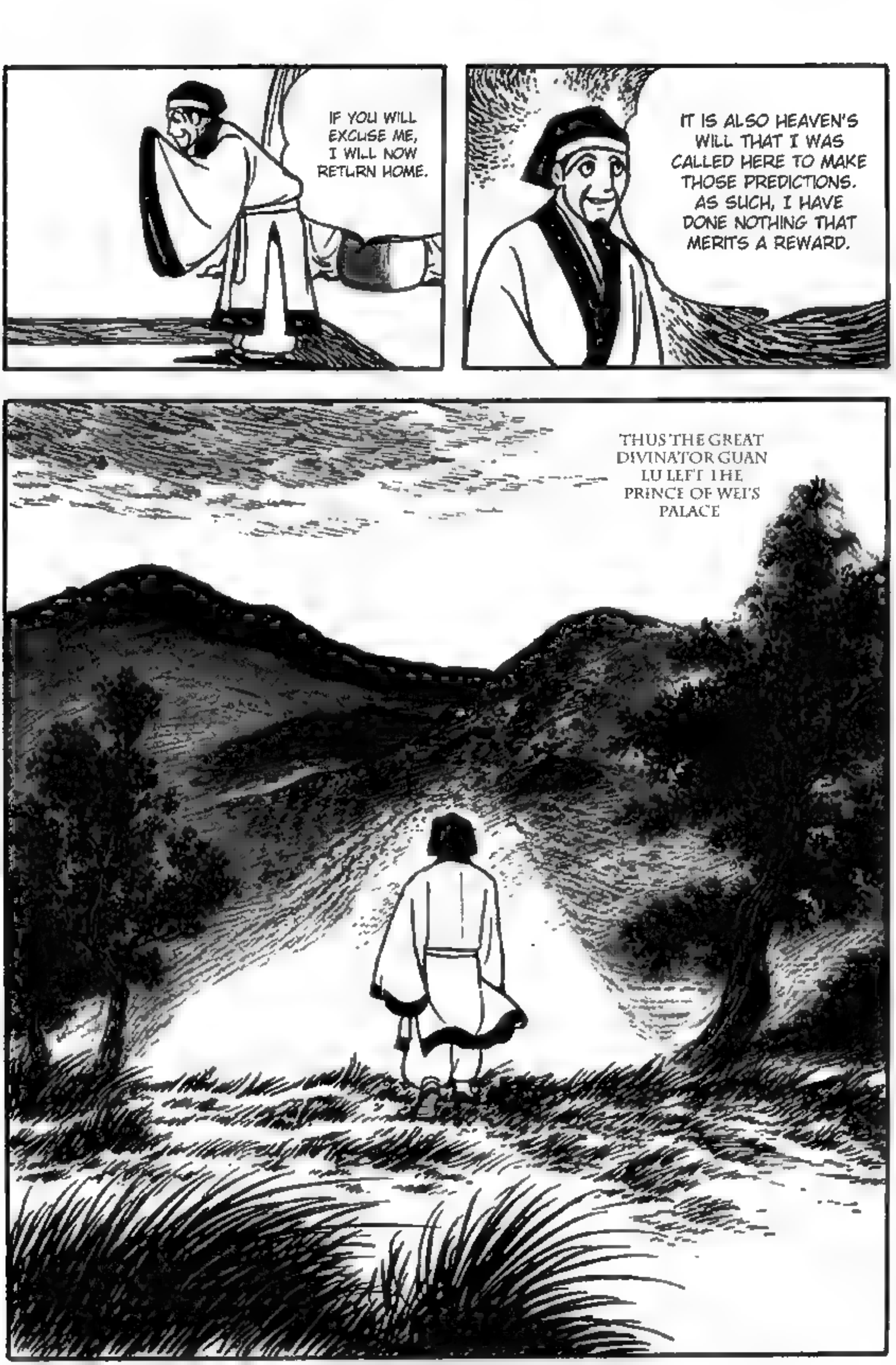
IT IS SIMPLY HEAVEN'S WILL THAT ALLOWED YOU TO STOMP THE REVOLT QUICKLY.

I HAVE NO ABILITY TO PUT OUT FIRES OR HOLD BACK FLOODS.

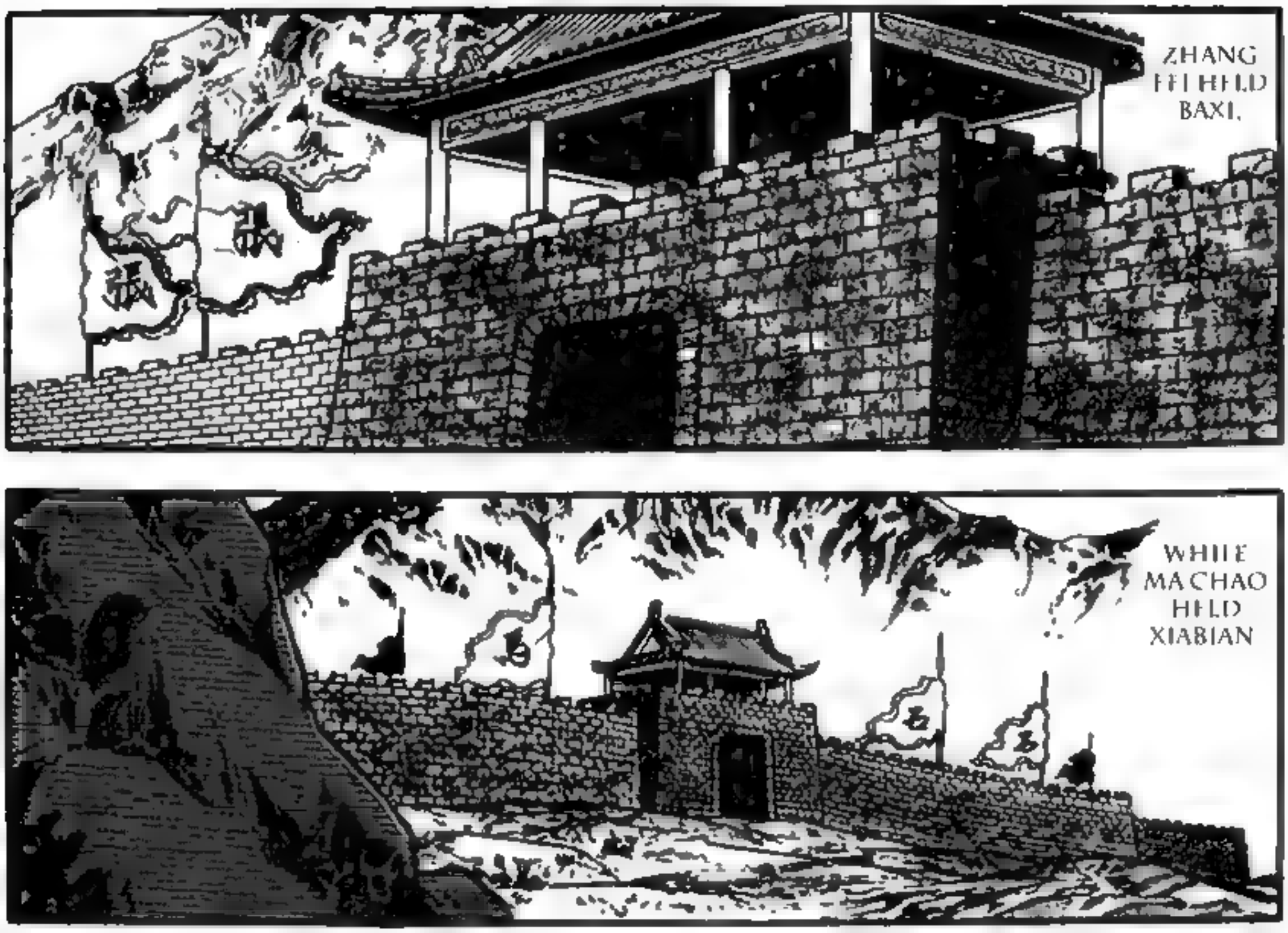
NAME YOUR DESIRED REWARD AND YOU SHALL HAVE IT.

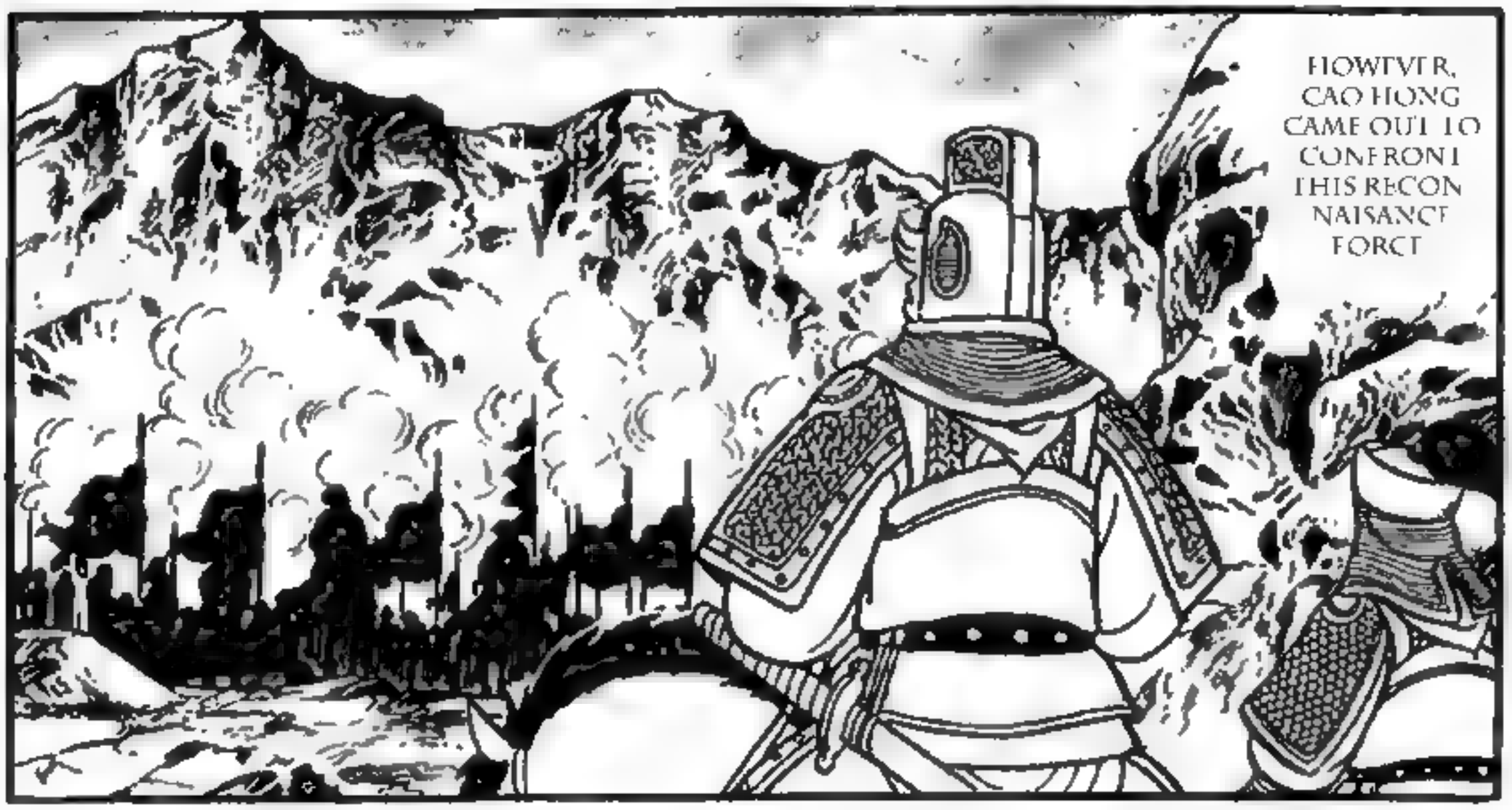
IF YOU WILL EXCUSE ME, I WILL NOW RETURN HOME.

IT IS ALSO HEAVEN'S WILL THAT I WAS CALLED HERE TO MAKE THOSE PREDICTIONS. AS SUCH, I HAVE DONE NOTHING THAT MERITS A REWARD.


THUS THE GREAT DIVINATOR GUAN LU LEFT THE PRINCE OF WEI'S PALACE

STORM CLOUDS


ZHANG FEI HELD BAXI.
WHITE MA CHAO HELD XIABIAN
MA CHAO ORDERED WU LAN TO LEAD A SCOUTING FORCE TO PROBE THE SITUATION


HOWEVER, CAO HONG CAME OUT TO CONFRONT THIS RECONNAISANCE FORCE

HOW CAN YOU, A GENERAL, RUN AWAY AT THE FIRST SIGHT OF ENEMIES WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A SKIRMISH?

HE'S COME OUT WITH THE BULK OF HIS FORCES. WE MUST RETREAT.

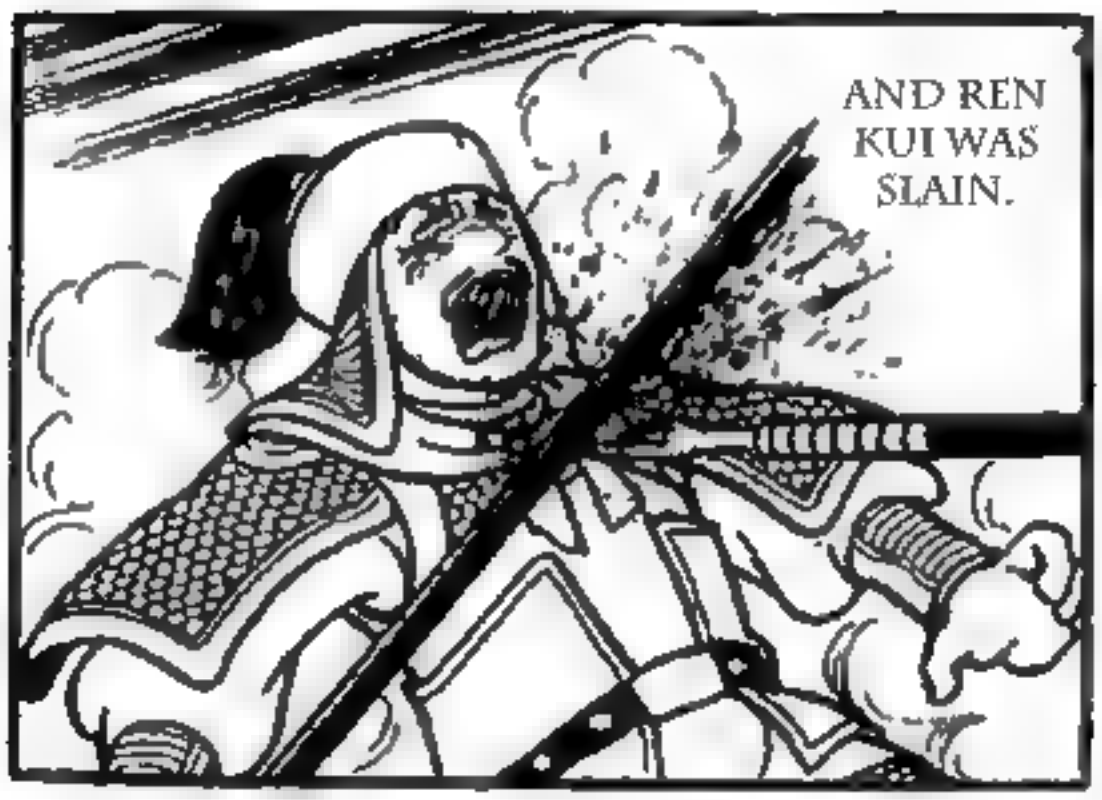
FINE.

HM...

THE ENEMIES HAVE ONLY JUST ARRIVED TO THIS REGION. LET US FIRST BRING DOWN THEIR GENERAL MORALE.

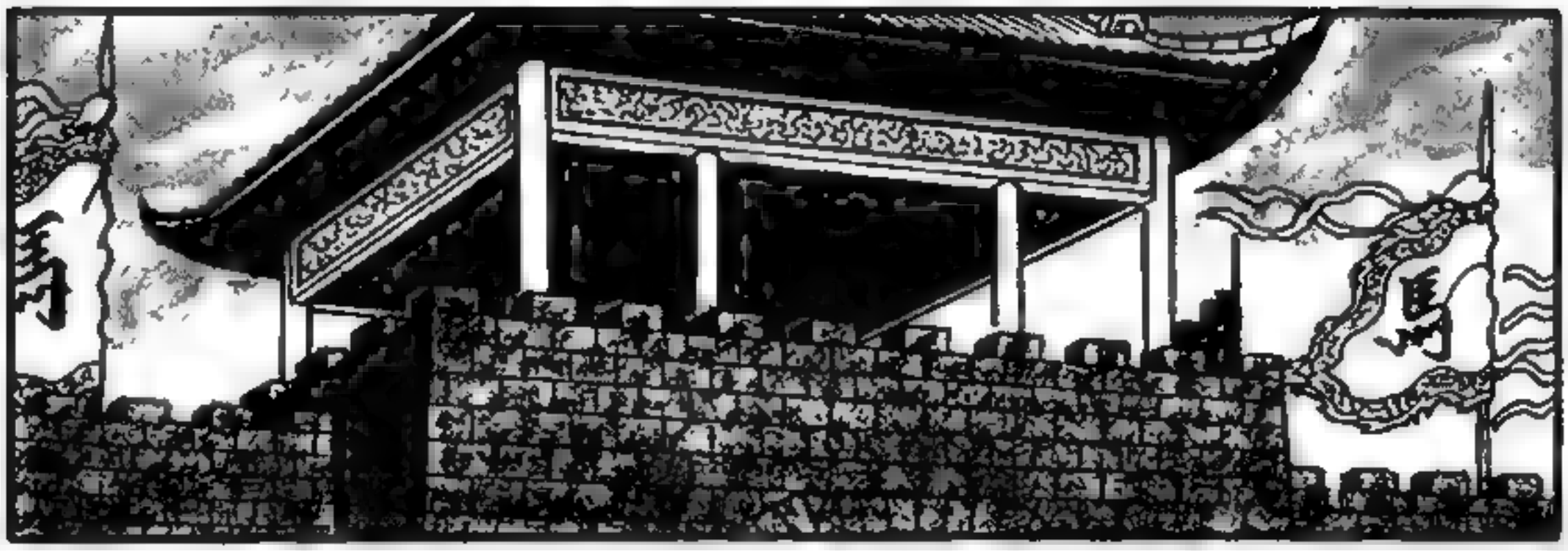
LET'S SHOW THESE WEI TROOPS A THING OR TWO!

WU LAN HAD MADE A CARELESS BLUNDER BY UNDERESTIMATING HIS FOES AND CHARGING BLINDLY.


AND REN
KUI WAS
SLAIN.

THE WEI
TROOPS
FOUGHT
FIERCELY

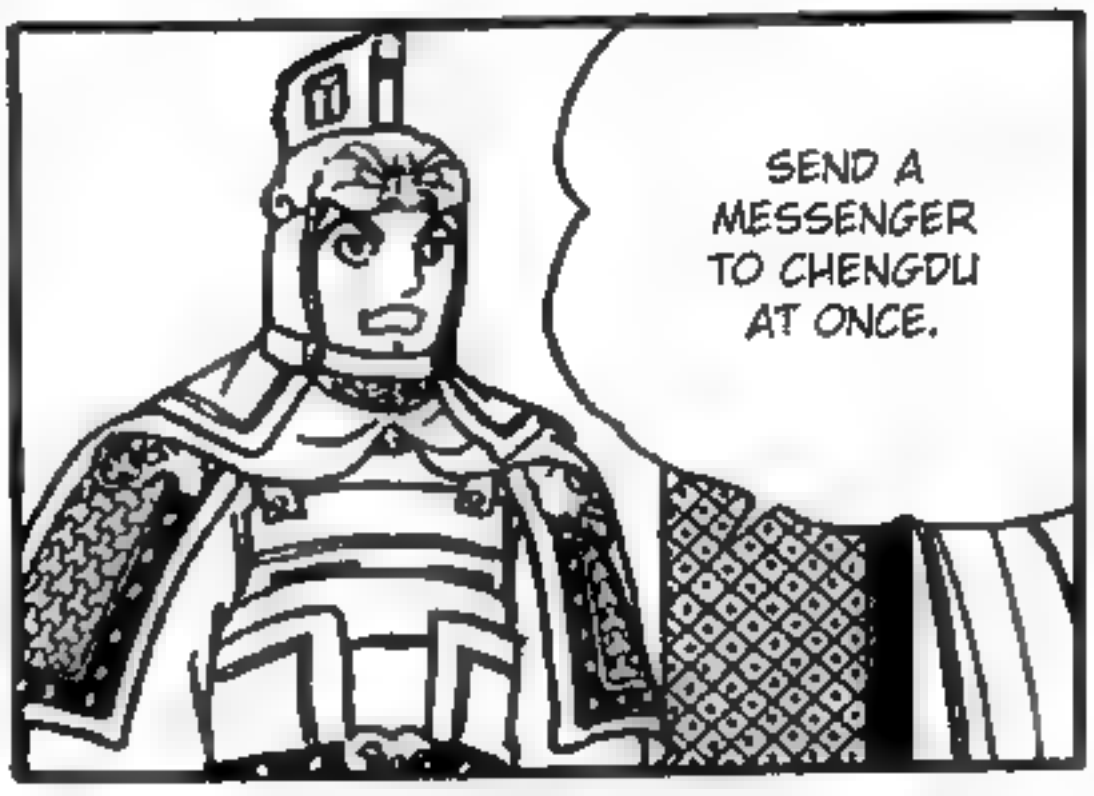
WU LAN AND
HIS FORCES
BEAT BACK
A HASTY
RETREAT



WHAT COULD HAVE POSSIBLY SPURRED YOU ON TO CHALLENGE THEM WHEN YOU WERE OUTNUMBERED!? I KNOW WELL FROM MY BATTLES ALONG THE WEI RIVER JUST HOW TOUGH CAO CAO'S ARMY IS. WE MUST NOT ACT CARELESSLY.

I HAVE NO EXCUSES TO OFFER, SIR.
WHAT, YOU WERE ROUTED!?

YES, SIR...


SEND A MESSENGER TO CHENGDU AT ONCE.

西曰洪
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IS HE PERHAPS PLANNING SOMETHING, I WONDER...?
STRANGE... EVEN THE FIERCE MA CHAO SHOWS NO SIGN OF ATTACKING.

WITHDRAW!?

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LET US WITHDRAW TO NANZHENG FOR NOW.

曹洪

YES. THIS IS MA CHAO WE'RE UP AGAINST. ONE CAN NEVER BE TOO CAUTIOUS.

馬

WE'VE SLAIN ONE OF THEIR LEADERS IN A TRIUMPHANT BATTLE AND WE'RE ALREADY WITHDRAWING?

AND SO, CAO HONG'S ARMY TEMPORARILY WITHDREW FROM XIABIAN.

NANZHENG

南郑

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THE REASON WHY YOU WITHDREW EVEN AFTER HAVING MOMENTUM ON OUR SIDE.

THAT IS BECAUSE I HAVE PERSONALLY SEEN HOW DANGEROUS MA CHAO CAN BE DURING OUR BATTLES ALONG THE WEI RIVER.

UNDERSTAND WHAT?

SIR, I MUST CONFESS THAT I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND.

HAD THE CHANCELLOR NOT BRILLIANTLY TURNED MA CHAO AGAINST HIS ALLY HAN SUI, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN IN DIRE TROUBLE.

IN ANY CASE, WE WERE NEVER ORDERED TO ATTACK SHU. THE CHANCELLOR'S ORDERS WERE TO ONLY PREVENT A POSSIBLE SHU-INVASION INTO HANZHONG.

TO SEE THAT FEARSOME MA CHAO SILENTLY STAY SHUT BEHIND HIS WALLS MADE ME SUSPICIOUS OF SOME RUSE.

WHAT!?

IT IS TRUE THAT MA CHAO IS A FAMED WARRIOR, BUT I WONDER IF YOUR CAUTION IS DRIVEN MORE BY FEAR THAN LOGIC.

YOU ONLY SAY THAT BECAUSE YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW DANGEROUS THEY ARE.

ZHANG FEI AND MA CHAO MAY BE RENOWNED, BUT ONE NEEDN'T OVERESTIMATE THEIR CAPABILITIES.

GIVE ME 30,000 SOLDIERS AND I ASSURE YOU I WILL TAKE BAXI FROM ZHANG FEI!

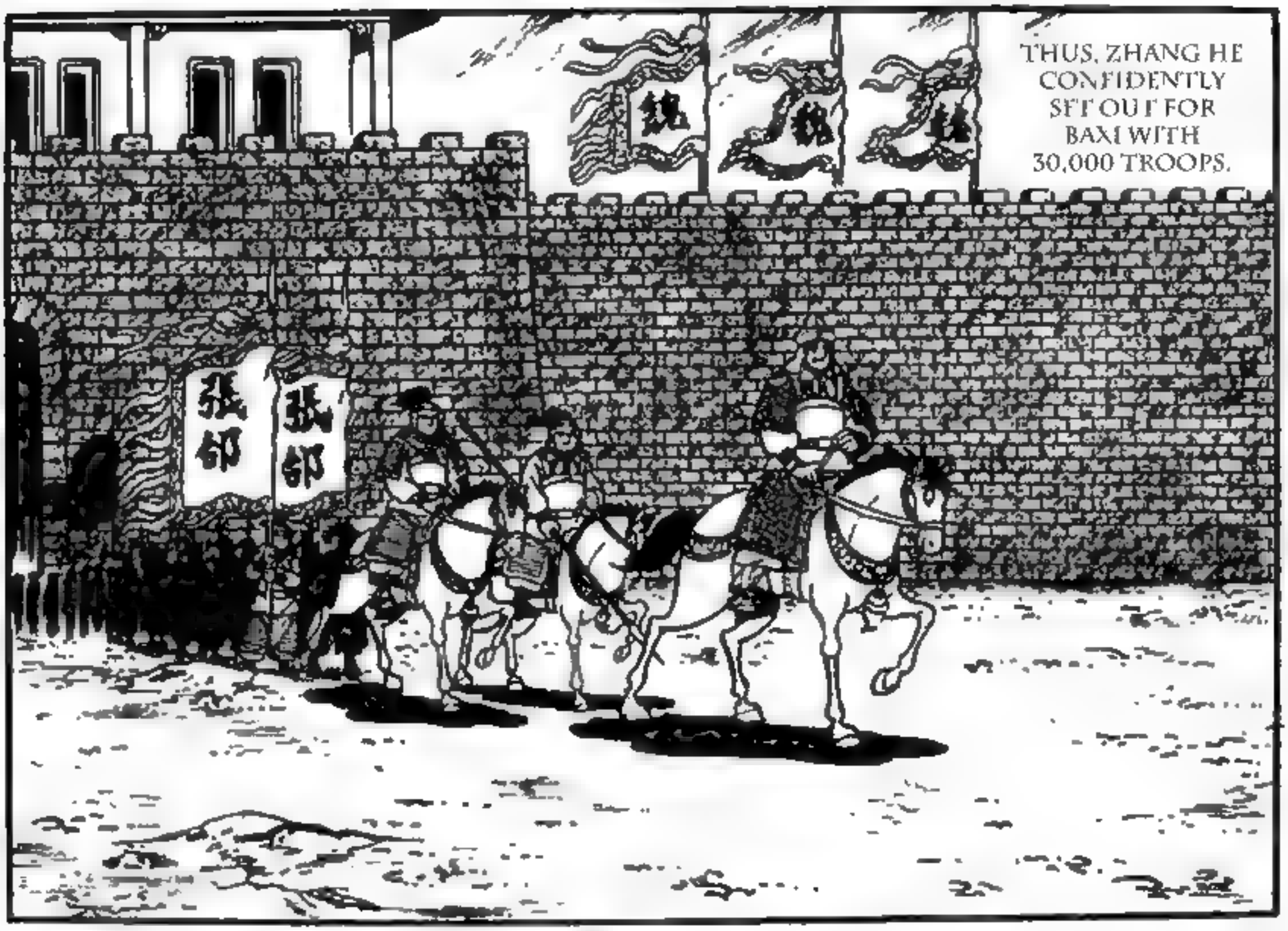
WHAT!?

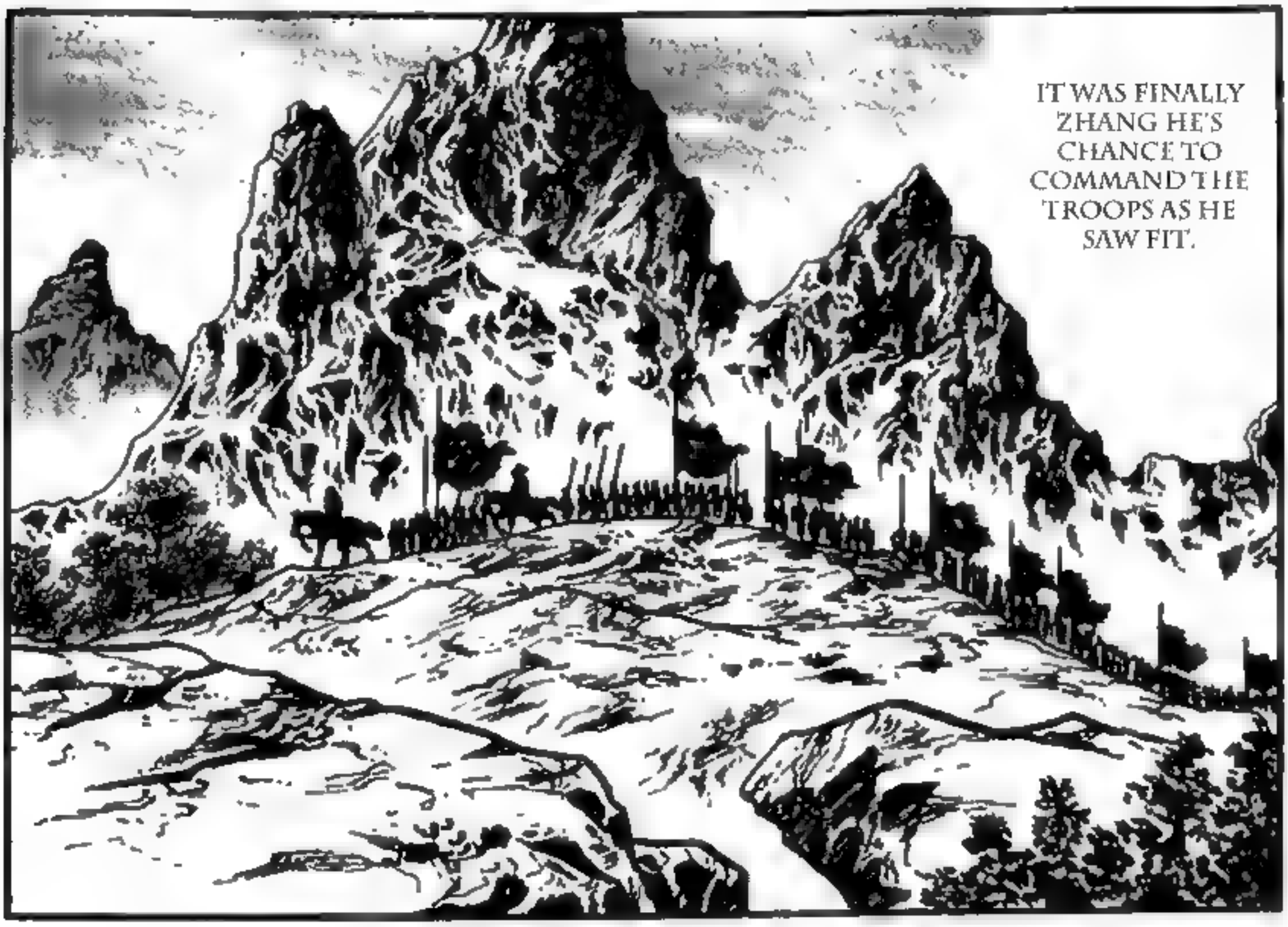
I THINK YOU ARE TOO BLINDED BY YOUR FEAR FOR THEM.

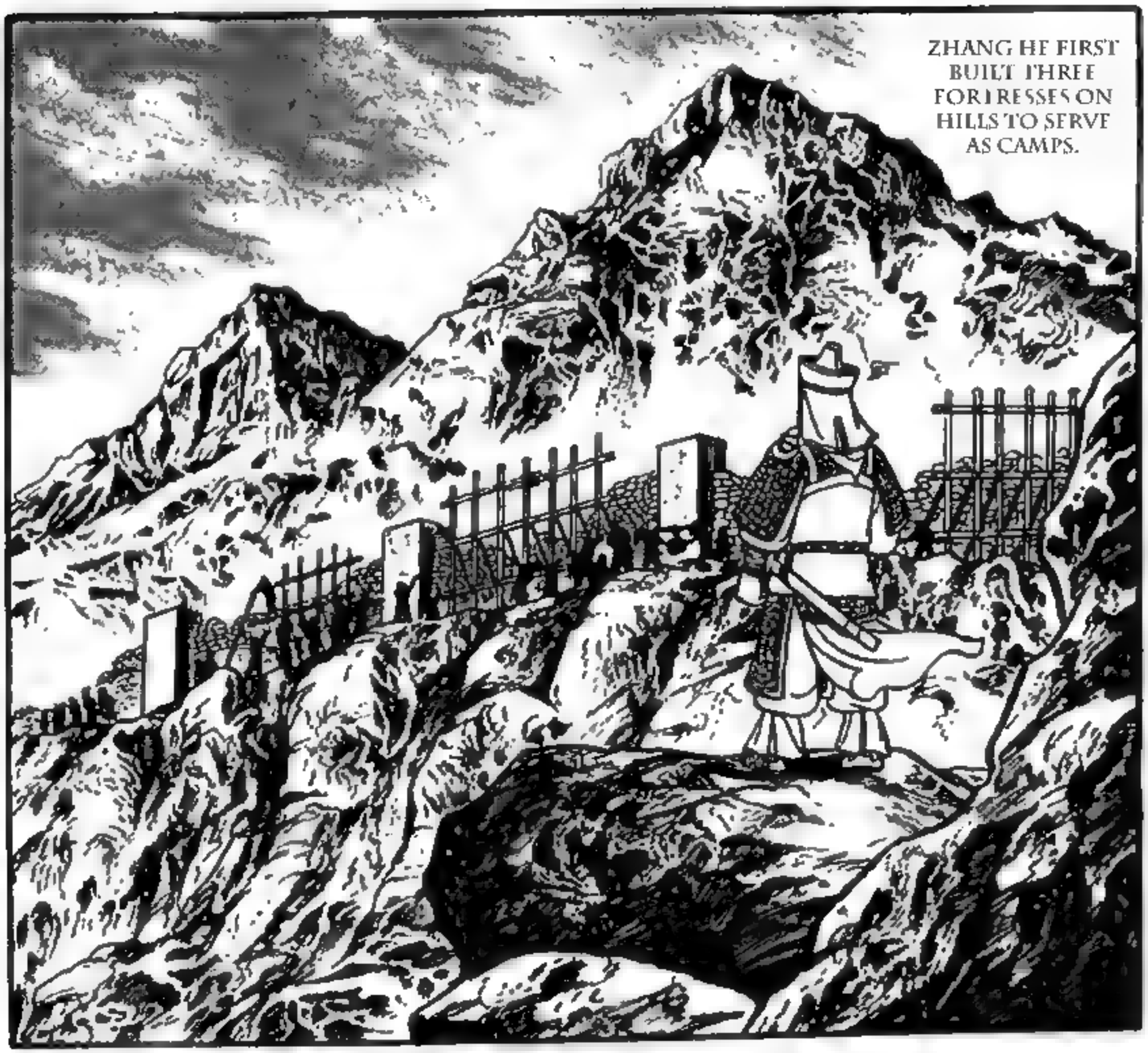
TO BE PERFECTLY BLUNT, ZHANG FEI IS BUT A CHILD TO ME.

THAT'S FAR EASIER SAID THAN DONE, ZHANG HE!

WHAT!?
IF THERE IS ANYTHING TO FEAR, IT IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE MEN'S MORALE WILL BE HURT WHEN SEEING THEIR GENERAL COWER FROM THE LIKES OF ZHANG FEI AND MA CHAO!
I WILL ACCEPT ANY PUNISHMENT WITH NO COMPLAINTS.
FINE, I SHALL GRANT YOU THE TROOPS IF YOU ARE THAT CONFIDENT! BUT HOW WILL YOU ATONE IF YOU WERE TO FAIL?
OF COURSE NOT.
FINE, BUT DO NOT FORGET THE WORDS YOU HAVE JUST UTTERED.


THUS, ZHANG HE CONFIDENTLY SET OUT FOR BAXI WITH 30,000 TROOPS.
張郃
張郃


IT WAS FINALLY ZHANG HE'S CHANCE TO COMMAND THE TROOPS AS HE SAW FIT.


ZHANG HE FIRST BUILT THREE FORTRESSES ON HILLS TO SERVE AS CAMPS.

DANGQU.
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MENGTOU,

AND DANGSHI
WERE THE
NAMES OF
THESE 3 CAMPS

ZHANG HE
THEN
STATIONED
HALF OF HIS
ARMY IN
THESE 3 CAMPS
WHILE TAKING
THE OTHER
HALF TO BAXI

ONLY 15,000? SHALL WE SALLY FORTH AND CRUSH THEM? OR SIMPLY DEFEND BAXI STEADFASTLY?

YES, I BELIEVE ZHANG HE IS BRINGING WITH HIM 15,000 MEN.

LEI TONG, IT SEEMS THE ENEMY IS COMING.

YES...

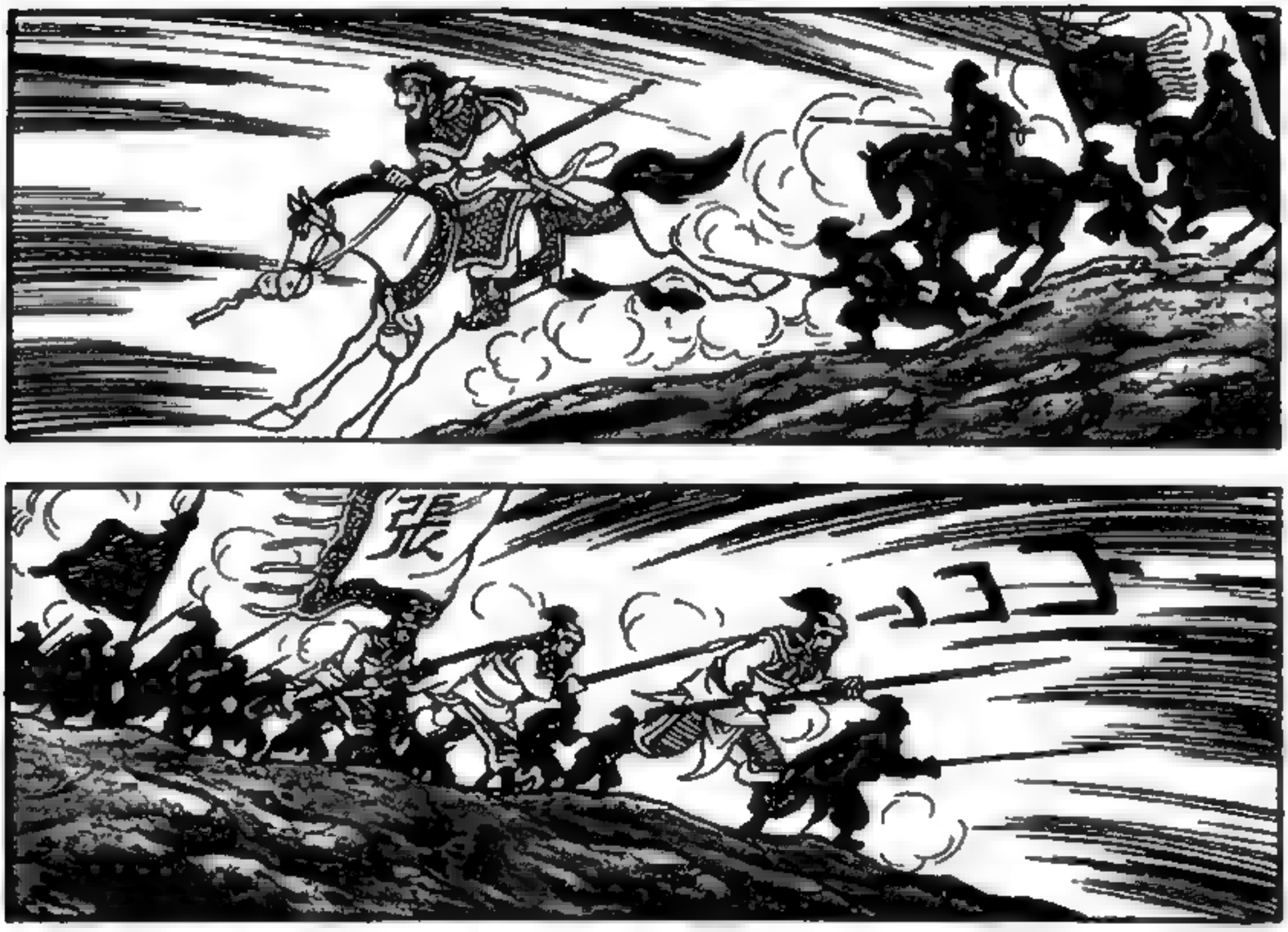
AN AMBUSH IN ROUGH TERRAIN WILL BE IDEAL, IN MY OPINION, SIR.

YES, SIR.
I WILL GIVE YOU COMMAND OF 5000 TROOPS, LEI TONG. I WILL ALSO TAKE 5000 TROOPS MYSELF.
TIME FOR BATTLE, MEN!
EACH LEADING 5,000 TROOPS, ZHANG FEI AND LEI TONG SET FORTH FROM BAXI

AT LANG ZHONG, THEY AWAITED ZHANG HE'S ARRIVAL.

CRUSH THEM LIKE ANTS, MEN!

HA, IT SEEMS THEY'VE YET TO TAKE NOTICE OF US.


張

SO ZHANG FEI HAS COME OUT, HAS HE NOW?
SIR! IT'S ZHANG FEI'S TROOPS!

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ATTACK!

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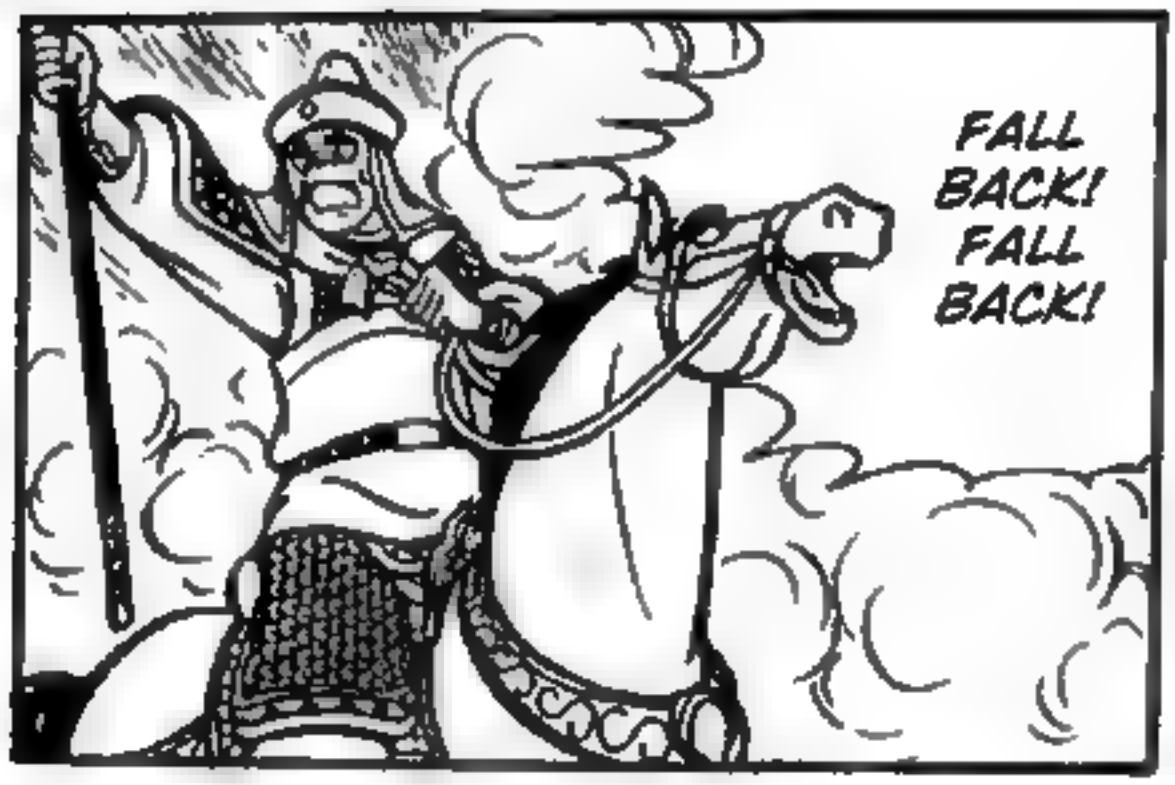
SIR! ENEMIES HAVE APPEARED TO OUR REAR!

WHAT!?

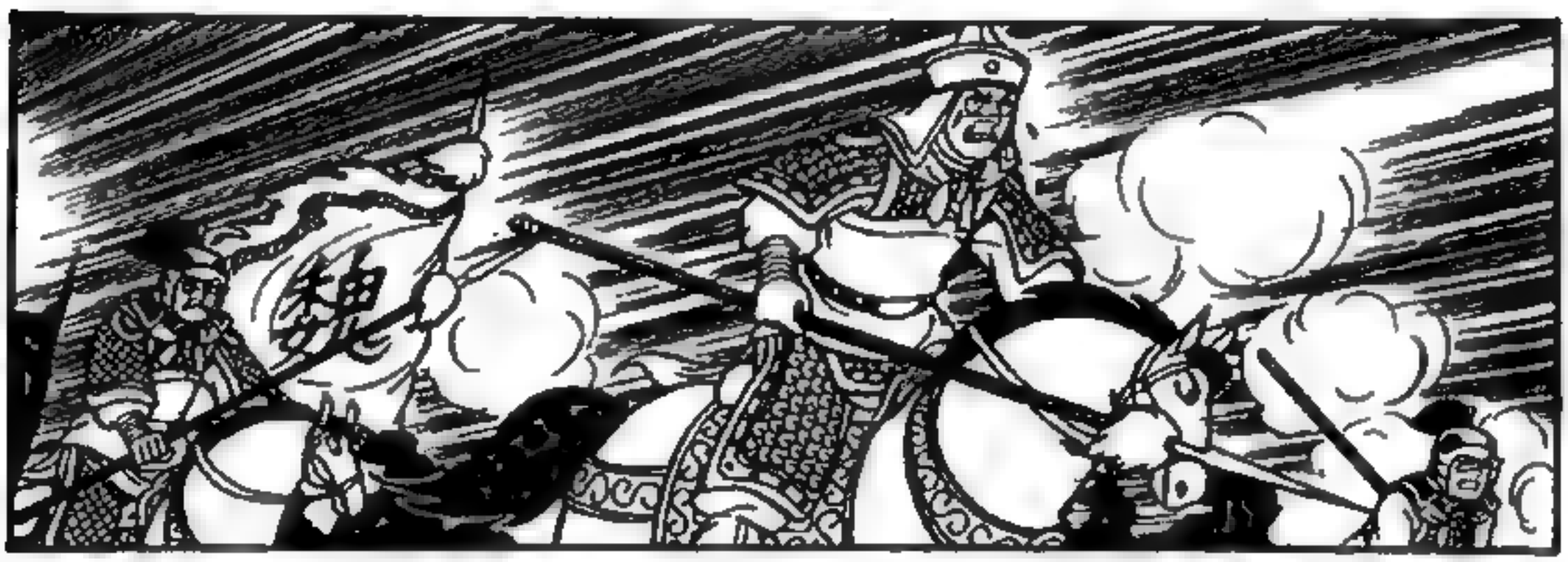
AHH!

SIR! OVER THERE BY THE VALLEY AS WELL!

ジャ ジャ ジャ


FALL BACK! FALL BACK!

W-WE'VE BEEN SURROUNDED!



RETREAT! DON'T FALL FOR THEIR GOADING!

WHAT DID YOU COME HERE FOR, IF NOT TO FIGHT? COME AT ME, ZHANG HE!

SIR, THERE'S SOMETHING ODD ABOUT THE ENEMIES THAT SUDDENLY SHOWED UP.

HM?

WHAT!?

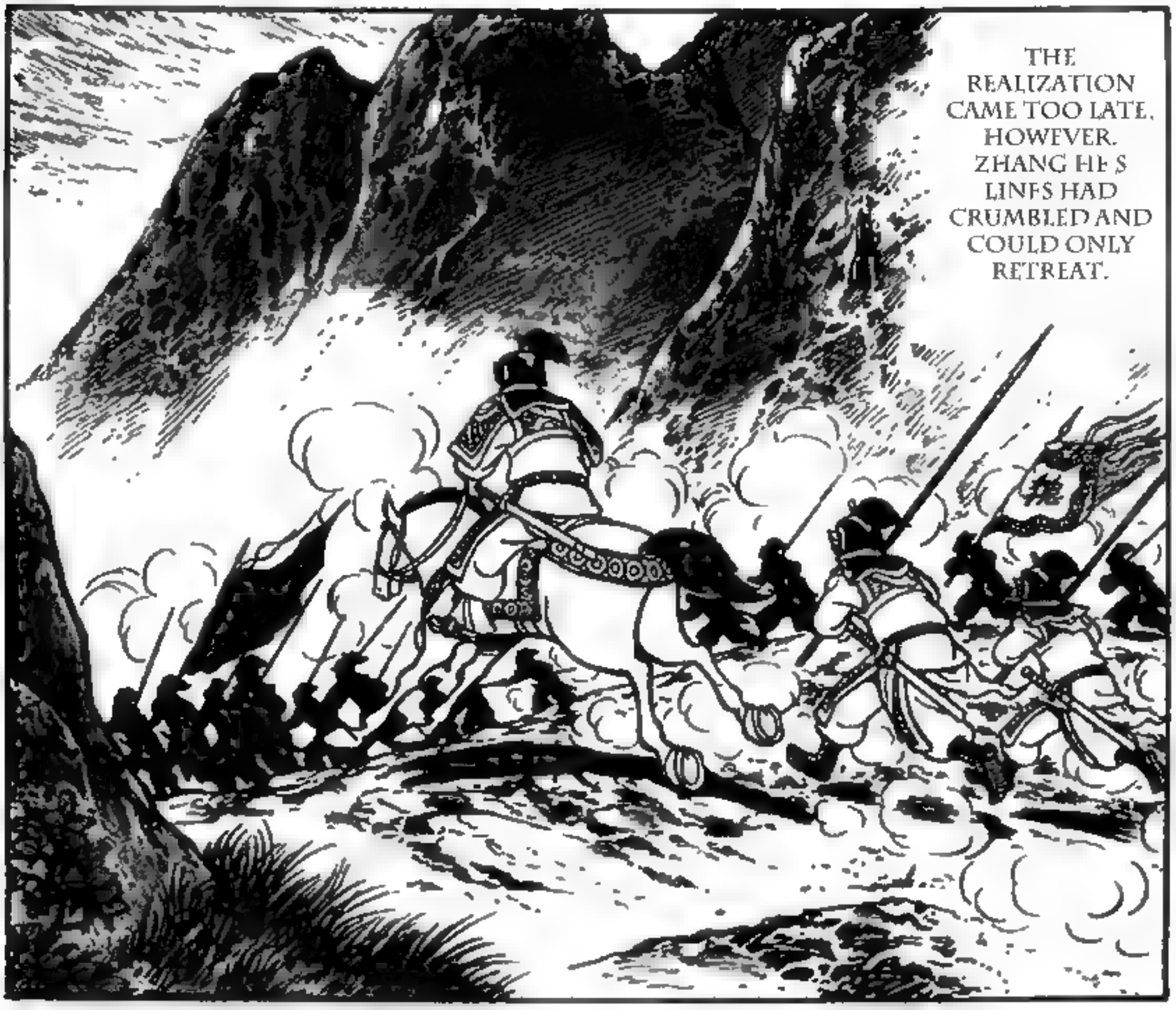
I SEE THE FLAGS WAVING BUT NO ACTUAL SOLDIERS COMING OUT TO ATTACK.

ODD?

YES, I THINK IT'S JUST A FEW ENEMY SOLDIERS WAVING AS MANY FLAGS AS THEY CAN.

SO IT WAS A BLUFF?

CURSES, WE'VE BEEN HAD!


THE REALIZATION CAME TOO LATE. HOWEVER. ZHANG HE'S LINES HAD CRUMBLED AND COULD ONLY RETREAT.

ZHANG HE RETREATED BACK TO HIS FIRST FORTIFIED CAMP, DANGQU

WHAT'S THE MATTER? COME OUT AND FIGHT, ZHANG HE!

DID YOUR BALLS SHRINK?

WHAT'S WRONG!?

TROOPS! MOCK ZHANG HE AND HIS MEN!

HA HA HA

HA HA

I THOUGHT I WAS FIGHTING SOLDIERS, NOT EUNUCHS!

OR MAYBE YOU NEVER HAD ANY TO BEGIN WITH!

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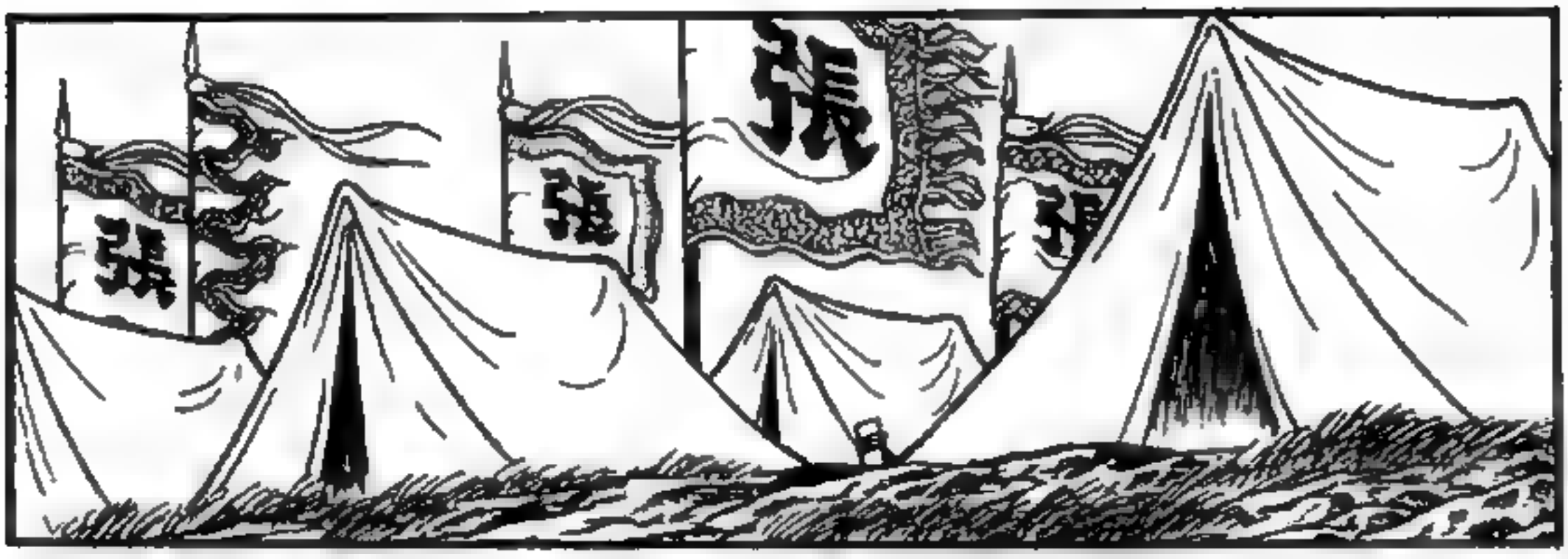
LET'S SET UP A CAMP OF OUR OWN.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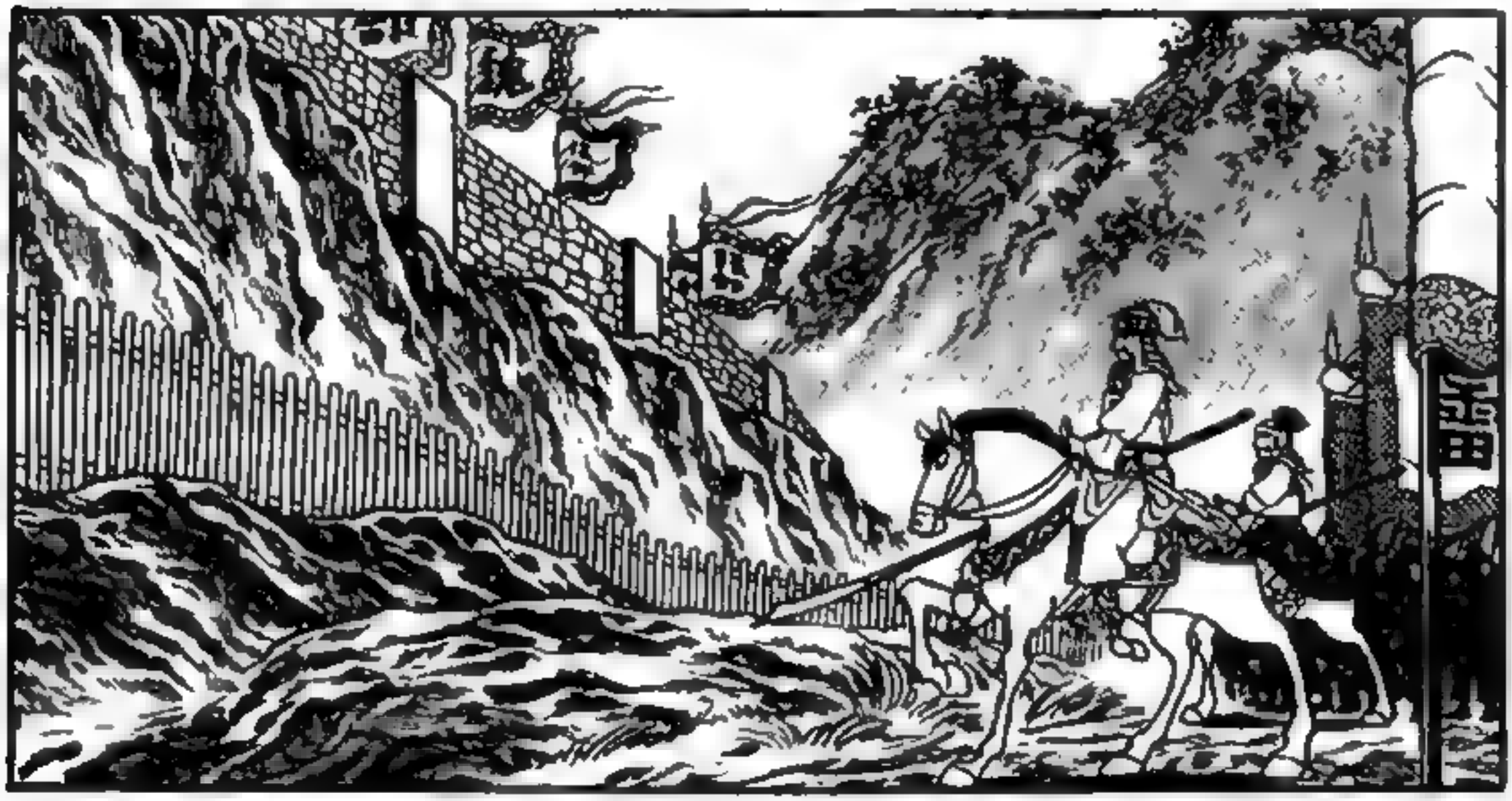
HM...

ALRIGHT THEN. TRY LEADING AN ATTACK, LEI TONG.

YES, THIS IS QUITE THE PICKLE...
ZHANG HE SEEMS TO SHOW NO INTENTION OF COMING OUT AT ALL.

YES, OF COURSE.
THE ENEMIES ARE SURE TO HAVE A TRICK OR TWO UP THEIR SLEEVE. BE CAREFUL.



WITH THAT MUG, I AIN'T SURPRISED!

STILL TOO SCARED TO SHOW YOURSELF, ZHANG HE!?

HM?

HUH?

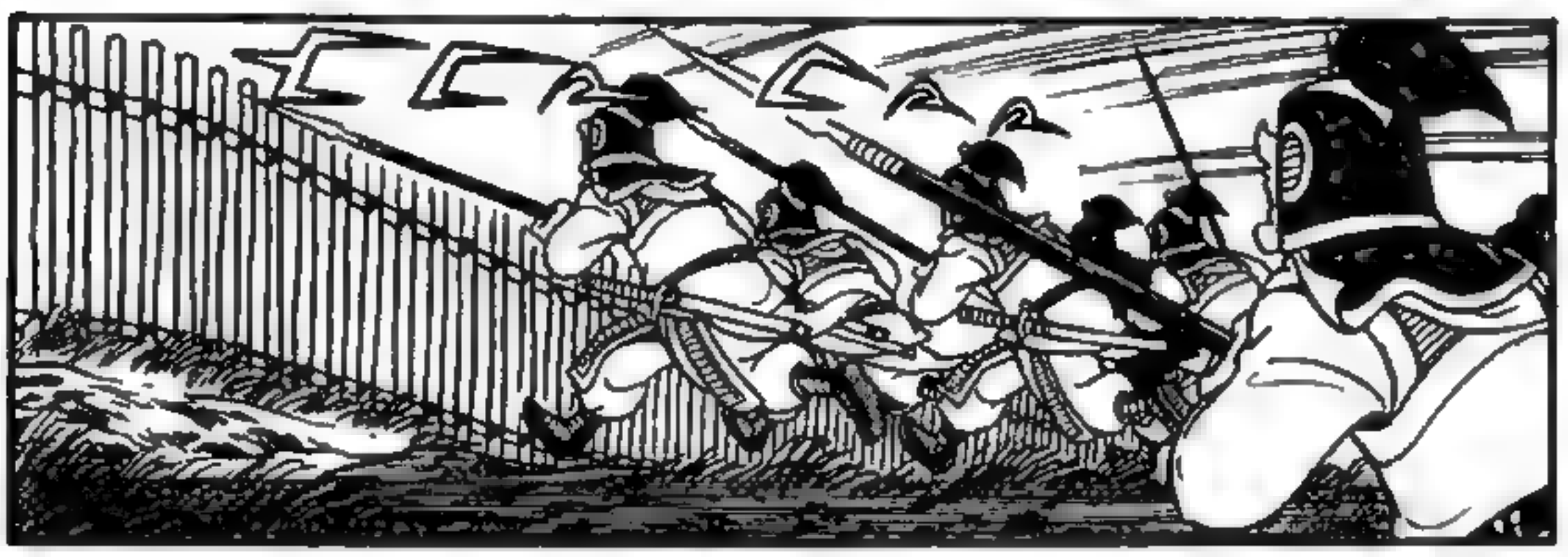
SILLY FOOLS. AS IF CHEAP TALK ALONE CAN BRING DOWN THIS FORTRESS!

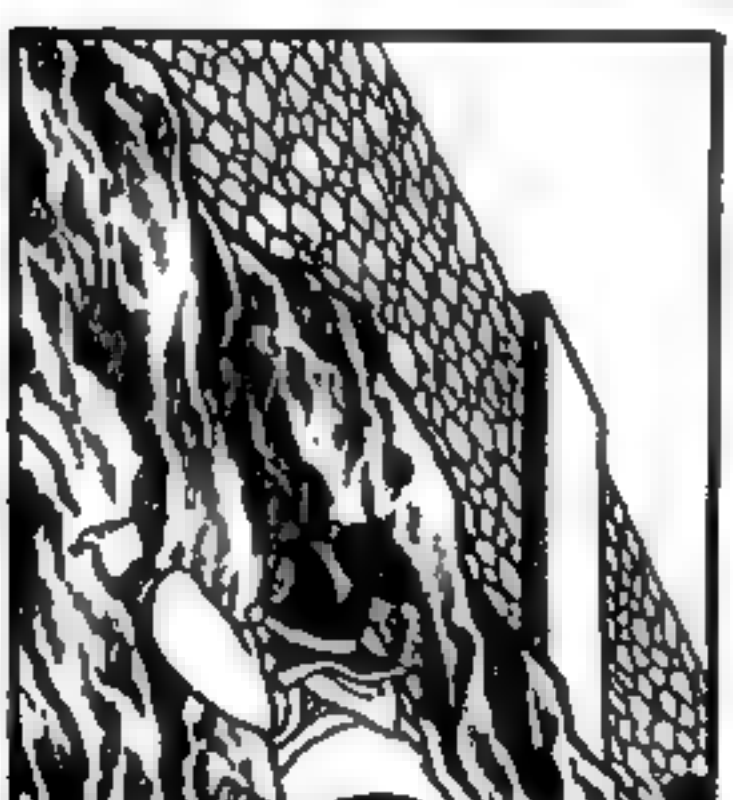
HERE, SIR.

WHO CARES. WATCHING THESE IDIOTS WILL MAKE FOR A FUN SIGHT WHILE DRINKING.
DON'T THEIR MOUTHS EVER GET TIRED?

BEGIN THE ATTACK!

NGHHH!





NOW!

HAHA.

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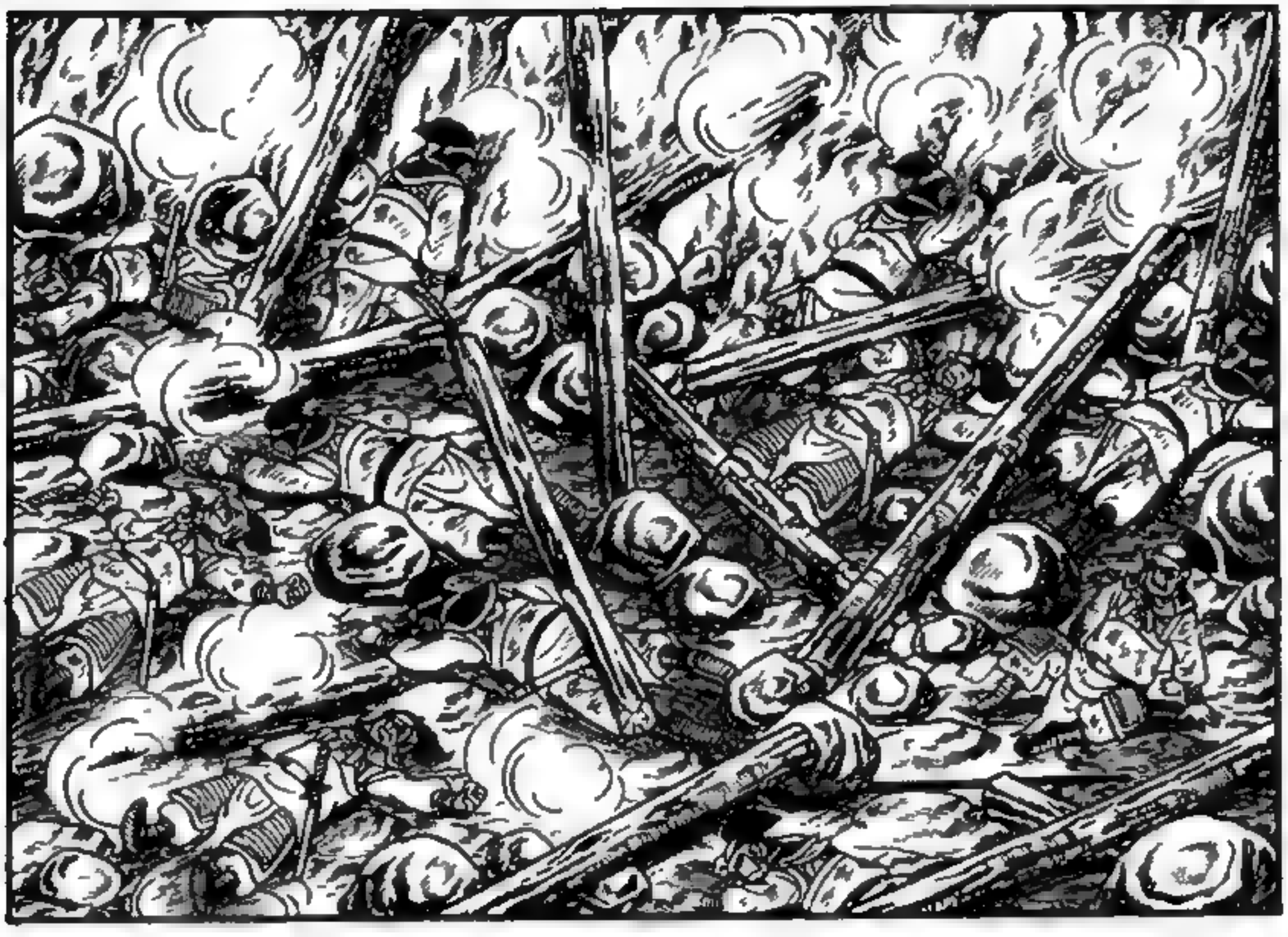
UGH!

AGHH!

RETREAT!
RETREAT!



HAHAHA!
ATTACK AGAIN
IF YOU DARE!
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張郃
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SO HE EGGED YOU ON?

IF THE ENEMIES ARE DRINKING WINE BEFORE US, THEN LET US DO THE SAME.

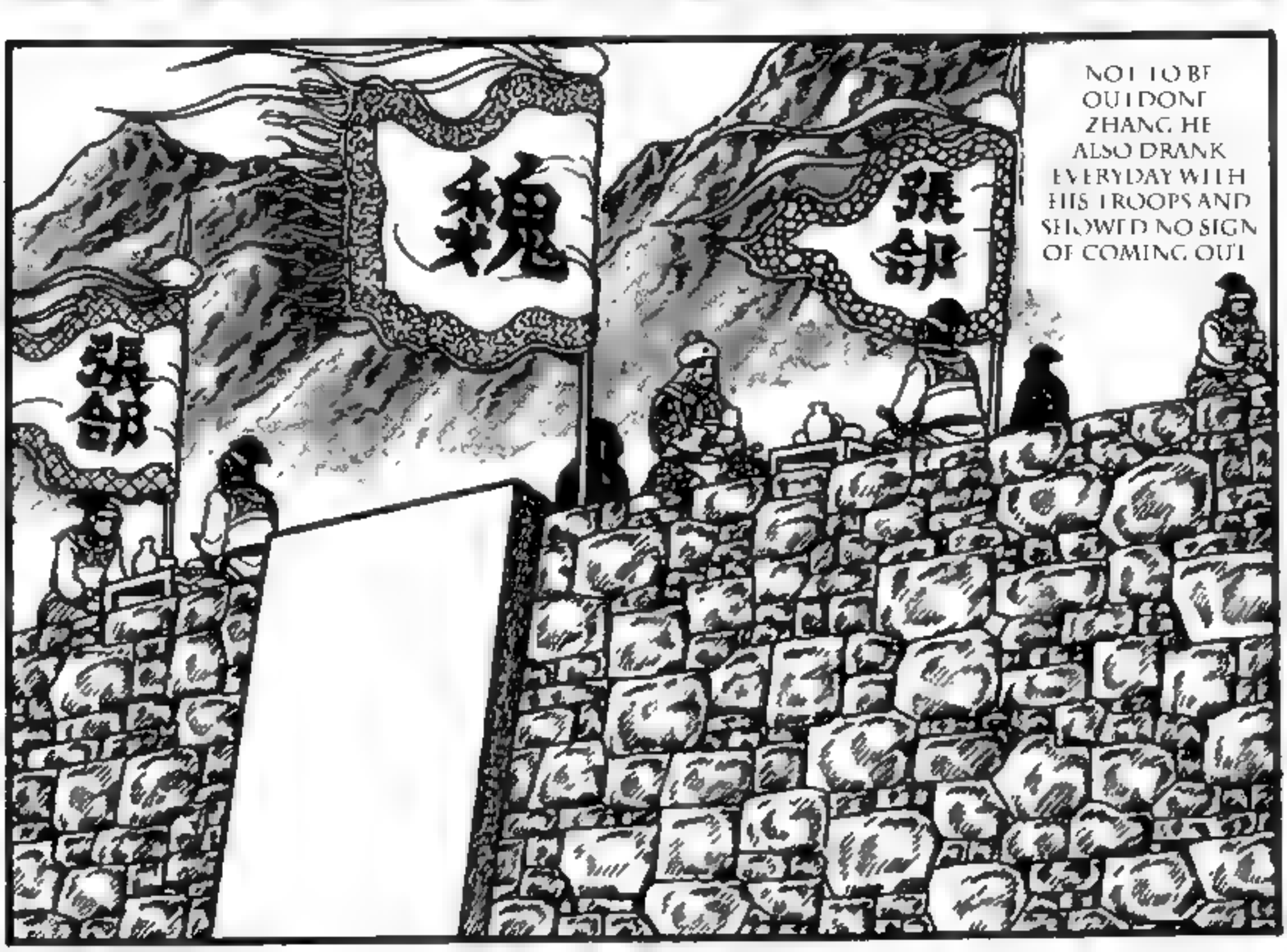
YES, WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO WAIT UNTIL THEY SALLY FORTH FROM THEIR FORT.

BUT WITH THOSE READIED DEFENSES, ATTACKS WILL BE RISKY.

YES, SIR.

WE SHALL HAVE A DRINKING PARTY RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM!

AND SO, ZHANG FEI AND HIS ARMY BUSIED THEMSELVES DRINKING AND INSULTING THE ENEMIES.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NOT TO BE OUTDONE ZHANG HE ALSO DRANK EVERYDAY WITH HIS TROOPS AND SHOWED NO SIGN OF COMING OUT

FINE WINE AT CAMP

CHENGDU
YES. THE ENEMIES HAVE SHUT THEM-SELVES INSIDE THE FORT SO EVERYDAY, THE GENERAL DRINKS IN PLAIN SIGHT OF THE ENEMIES WHILE CURSING THEM.
ZHANG FEI'S BEEN DRINKING IN FRONT OF AN ENEMY FORT FOR 50 DAYS NOW!?

OH, THERE'S NO CONCERN FOR THAT. MORE IMPORTANTLY, I FEAR THERE IS NO GOOD WINE TO BE HAD ALL THE WAY UP IN THOSE MOUNTAINS. I SUGGEST WE SEND HIM SO JUGS OF FINE WINE.

KONGMING, YOU DON'T THINK ZHANG FEI'S GETTING CARRIED AWAY WITH DRINKING AGAIN, DO YOU?

ZHANG FEI HAS MATURED INTO A FINE GENERAL WITH BOTH BRAWN AND BRAINS.

DID MY LORD FORGET HOW YAN YAN WAS TAKEN ALIVE BY ZHANG FEI?

WHAT? YOU WANT ME TO SEND HIM ***MORE*** WINE, EVEN THOUGH HE'S GETTING DRUNK EVERYDAY!?

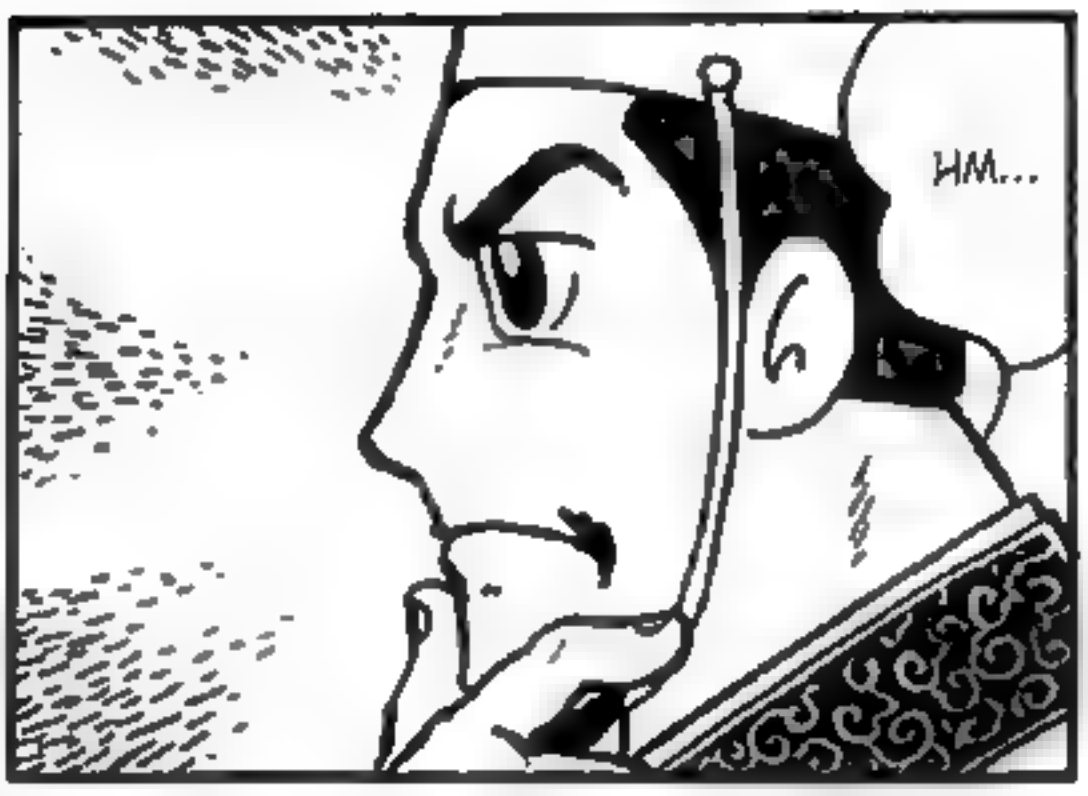
SO HE'S NOT DRINKING PURELY FOR PLEASURE, IS HE NOW...

THIS IS MOST LIKELY A PART OF HIS SECRET PLAN.

THEN WHY DON'T YOU SEND WEI YAN?

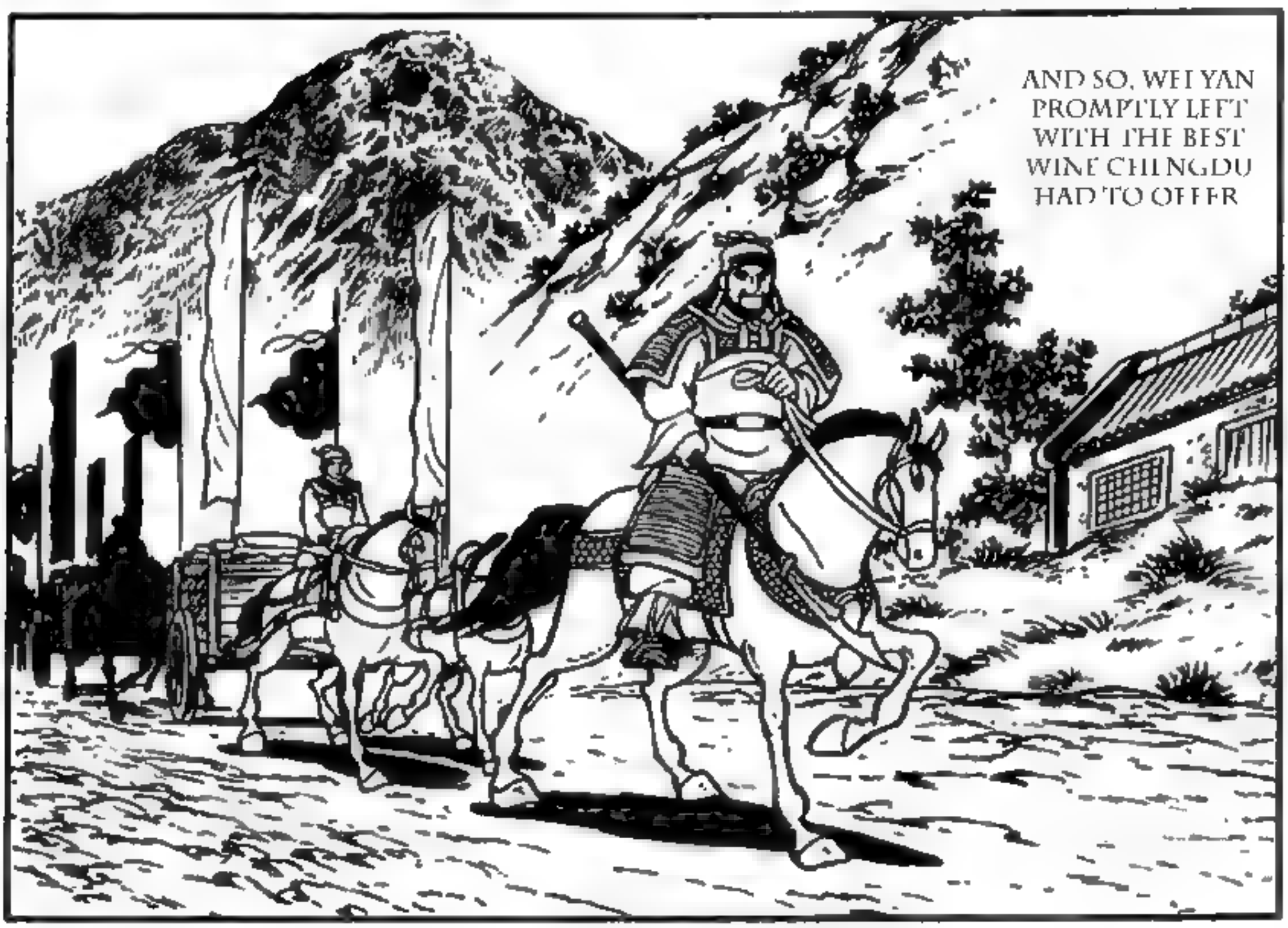
YOU'RE LIKELY RIGHT, BUT I'VE JUST HAD TOO MANY BAD EXPERI-ENCES WITH HIS DRINK ING PROBLEM OVER THE YEARS, YOU SEE .

WEI YAN!


HM...

YES, SIR.
I WANT YOU TO DELIVER 50 JUGS OF FINE WINE TO ZHANG FEI.

YES?


AND SO, WEI YAN PROMPTLY LEFT WITH THE BEST WINE CHENGDU HAD TO OFFER

VICTORY IS WITHIN MY GRASP NOW.

YES, SIR. GENERAL WEI YAN HAS COME TO MAKE THE DELIVERY.

WHAT? A DELIVERY OF WINE FROM CHENGDU?

I BRING YOU 50 JUGS OF CHENGDU'S FINEST WINE!

THANKS FOR COMING, WEI YAN.

LEI TONG, YOU ARE TO LEAD MY LEFT WING.

WEI YAN, I WANT YOU TO LEAD MY RIGHT WING.

JUST AS I THOUGHT, YOU DID HAVE A PLAN.

THE WAVING OF THE RED FLAG WILL BE THE SIGNAL TO ATTACK.

魏

魏

LET ME SEE MYSELF.

YES, SIR.

WHAT? THEY'VE RECEIVED MORE WINE FROM CHENGDU AND THEIR CAMP IS IN DISARRAY?

OHH!

WE'LL ATTACK TONIGHT.

YES, THERE ARE BARELY ANY GUARDS POSTED ANY MORE.

ZHANG FEI'S LET DOWN HIS GUARD COM-PLETELY!

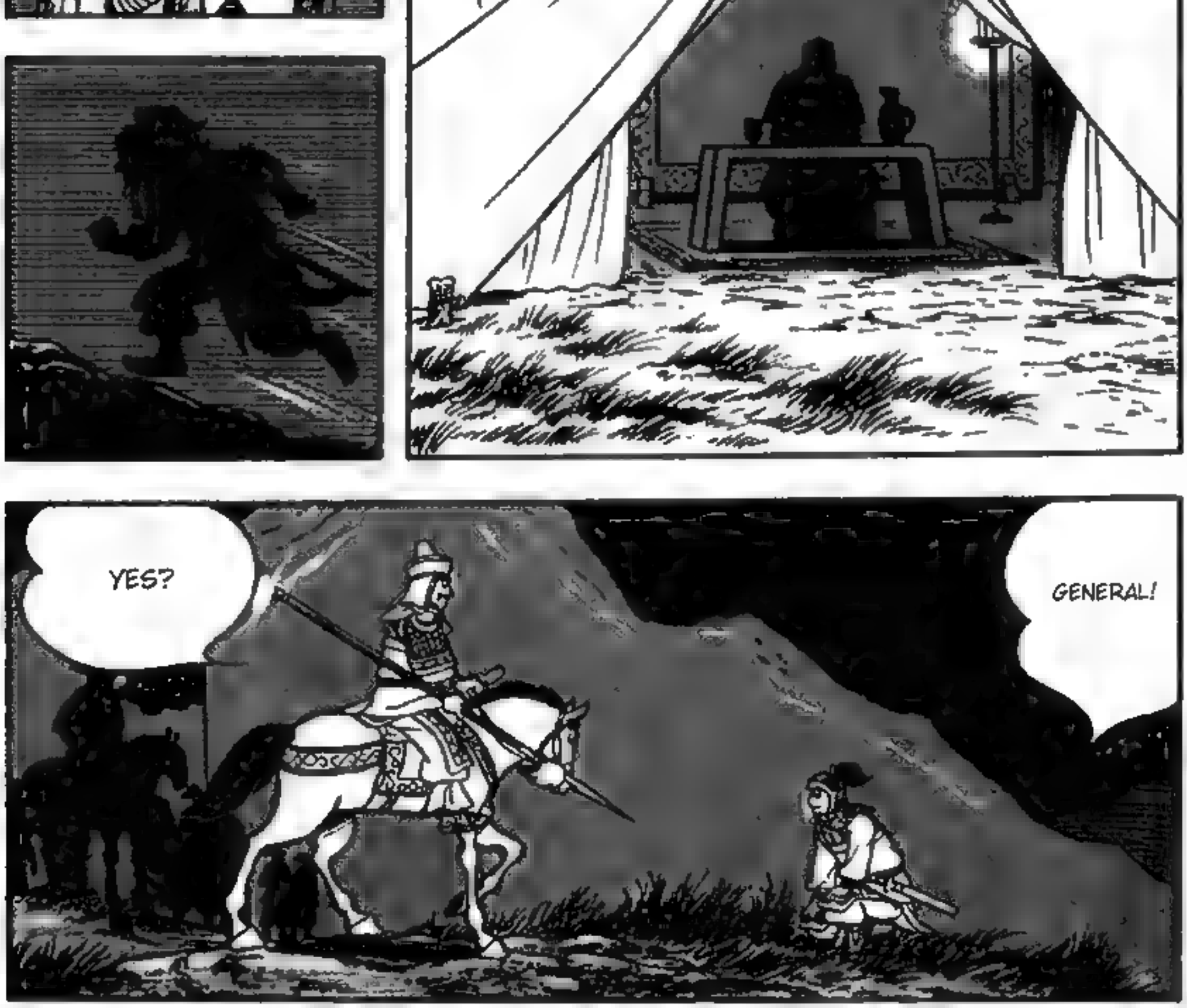
YES, SIR.

ALERT THE TROOPS IN THE OTHER TWO FORTS. WE'LL MOUNT A COMBINED ATTACK AND WIPE OUT THE ENEMIES FOR GOOD.

HAHA... DRINK AS MUCH AS YOU WANT, ZHANG FEI. IT'LL BE YOUR LAST...

YES, SIR.
GO SCOUT OUT THE SITUATION.

HA, HE'S STILL DRINKING!

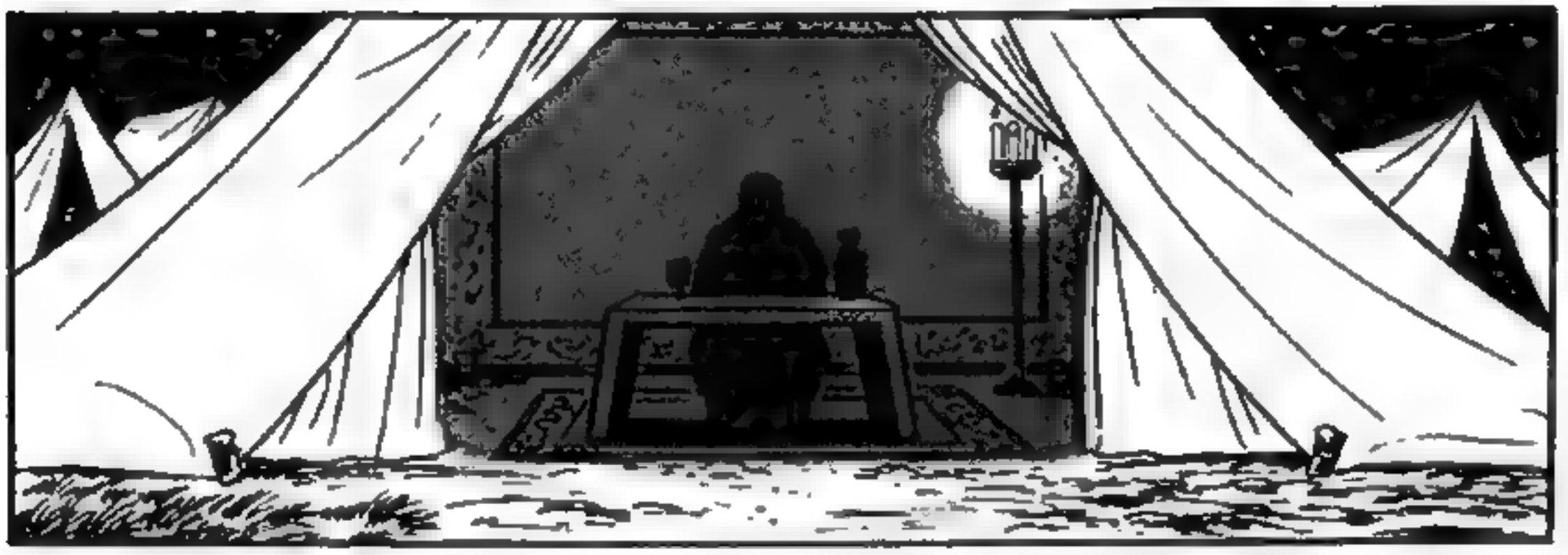

YES?
GENERAL!

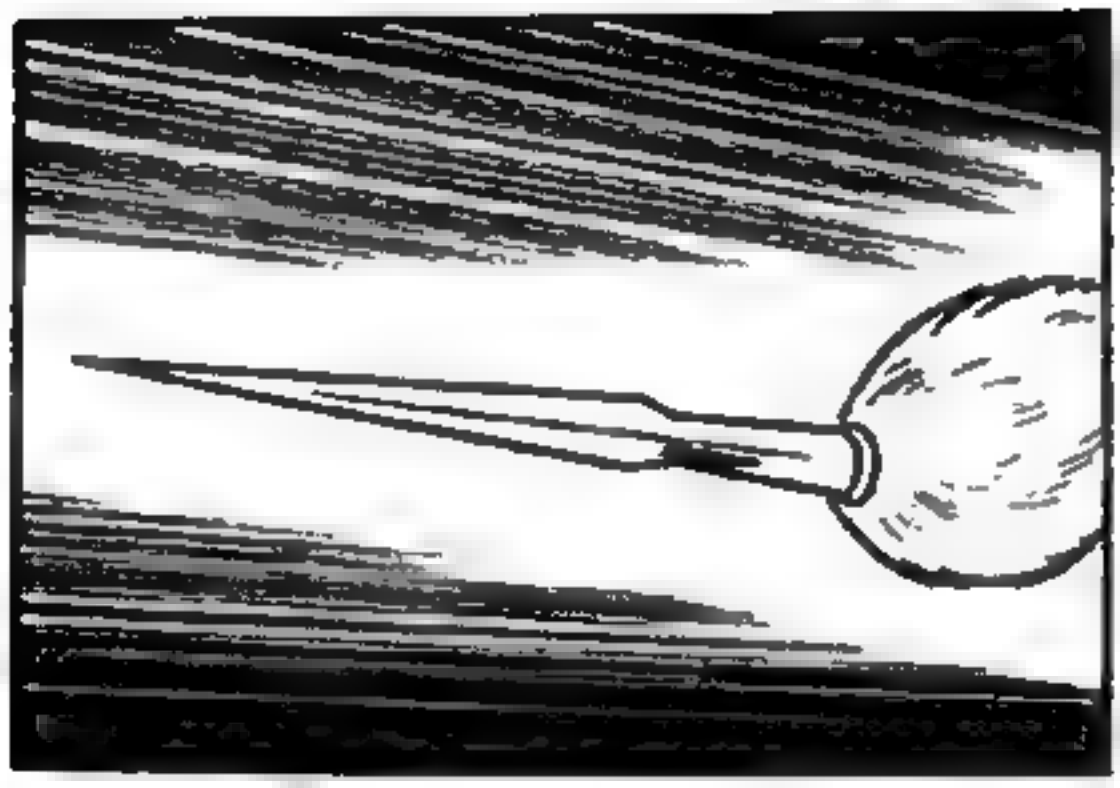
HE IS!?

ZHANG FEI IS DRINKING THE NIGHT AWAY.

KILL ZHANG FEI FIRST, AND THE REST WILL BE MERE DUST TO BRUSH ASIDE!

THAT'S HIM OVER THERE!





DIE, ZHANG FEI!

AHH!

HAHAHA! TOOK YA LONG ENOUGH TO GET YOUR ASS OUT OF YOUR FORT!

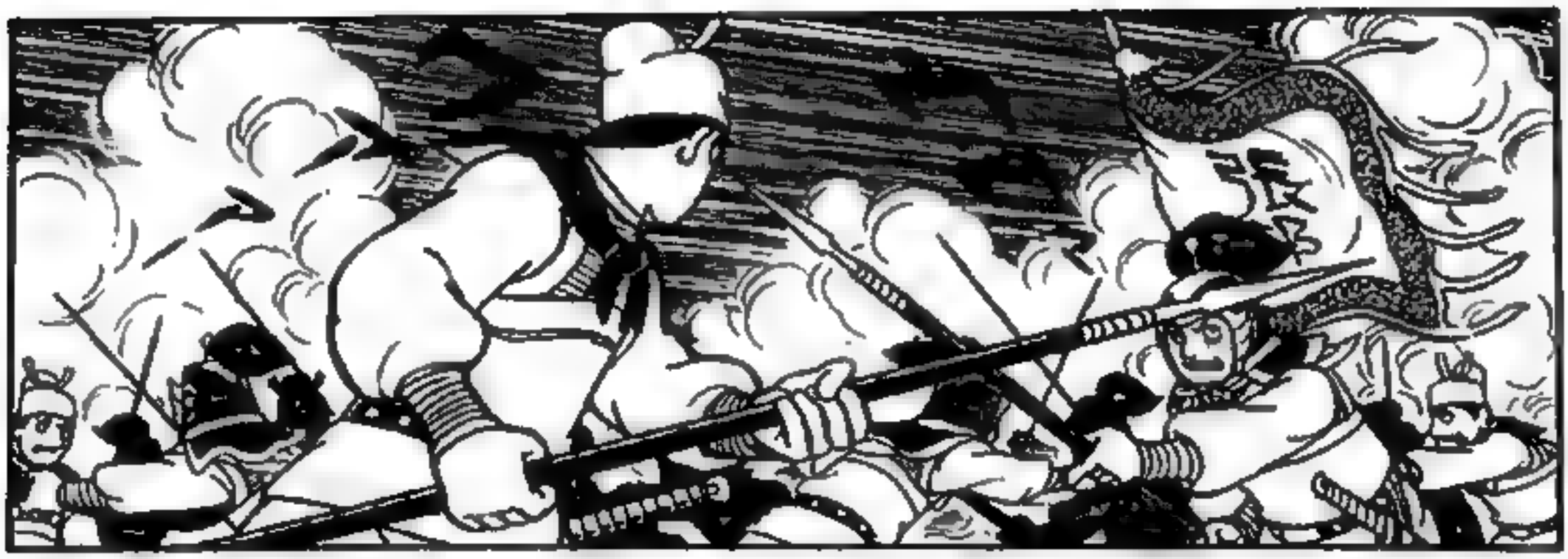
T-THIS IS...!?

GIVE THE SIGNAL!

AHH!

THAT'S THE SIGNAL!

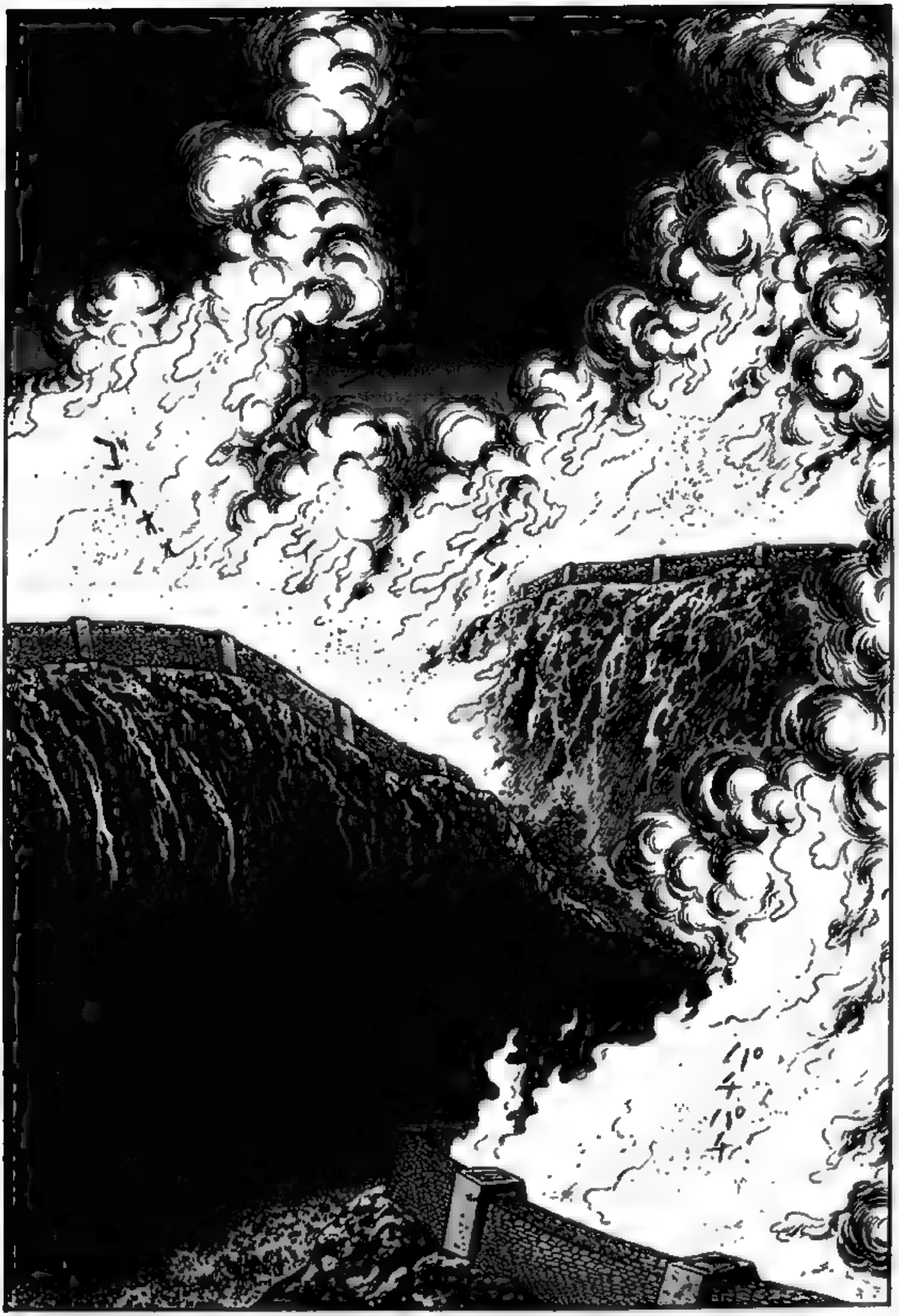
ATTACK!



SIR, LOOK!

WE'VE BEEN FLANKED FROM BOTH SIDES! RETREAT! RETREAT!

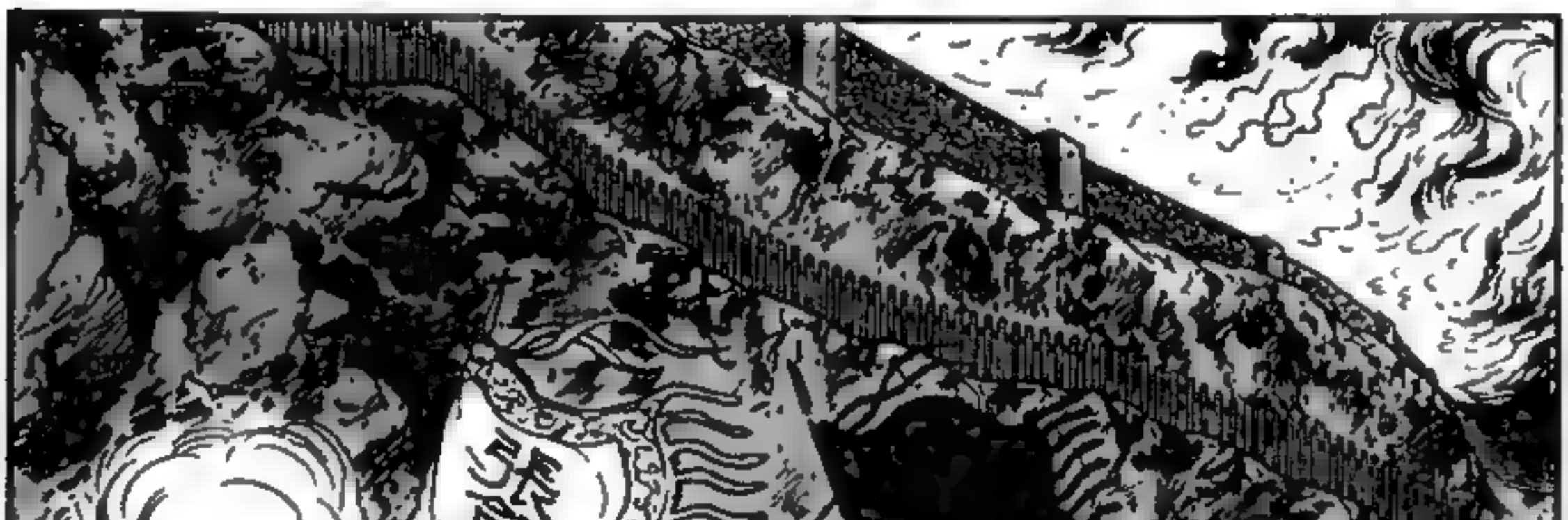
AH!



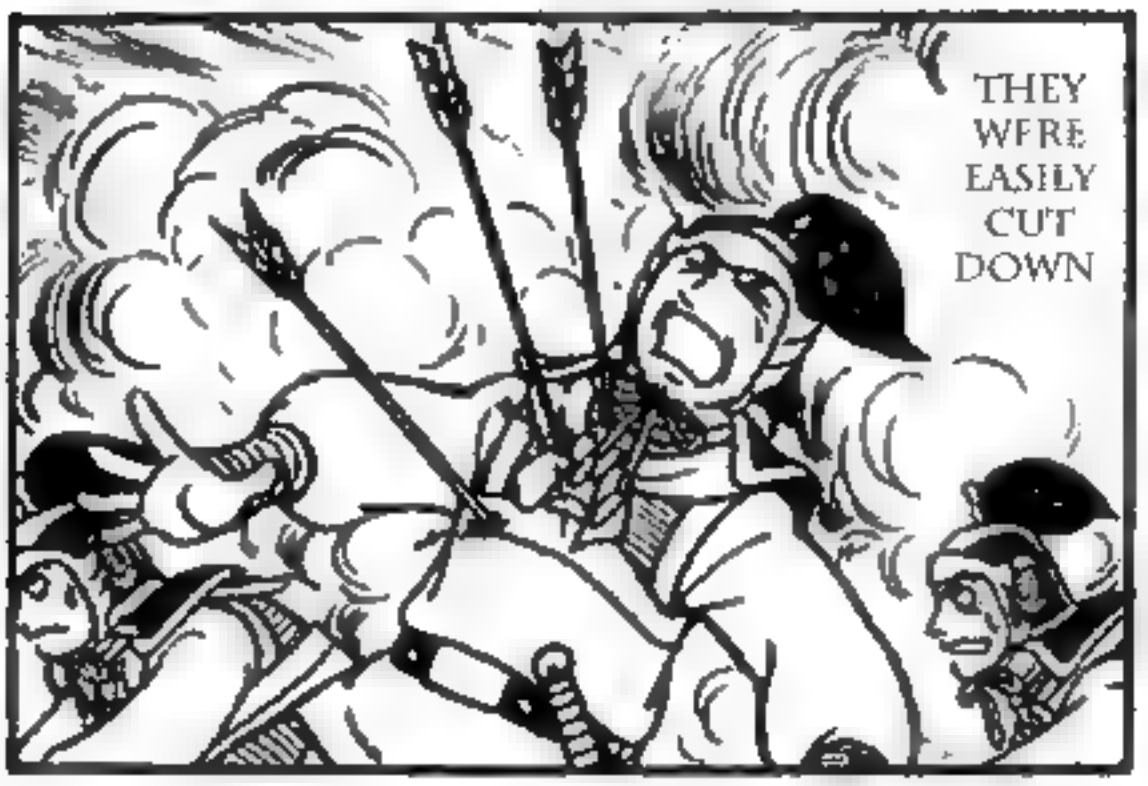
YES ..
WE MUST ESCAPE, SIR!

ALL 3 OF OUR FORTS ARE UP IN FLAMES!

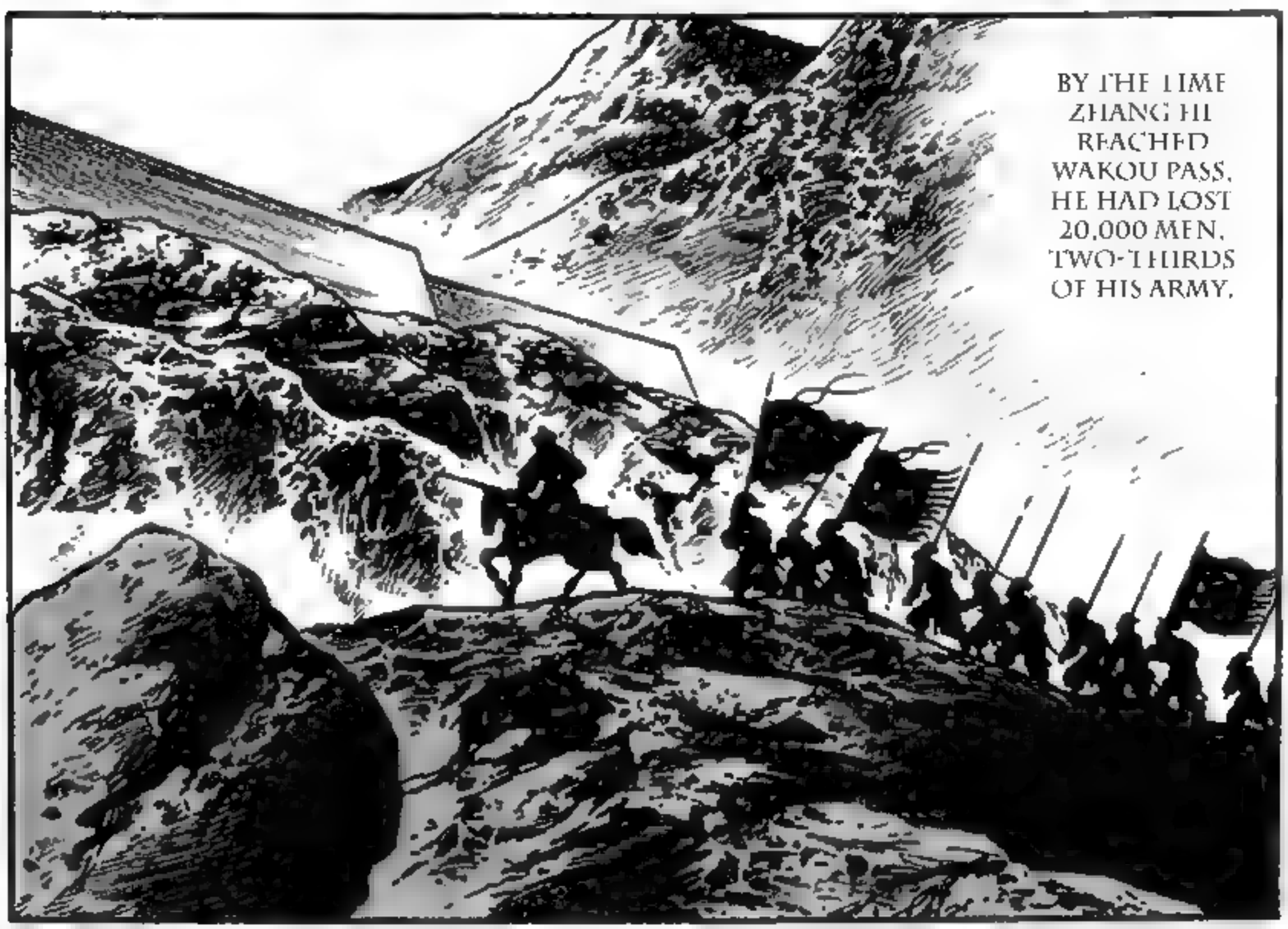
DO YOUR BEST TO PENETRATE THROUGH ONE OF THEIR LINES AND ESCAPE!



HOWEVER ZHANG HE'S PANICKED TROOPS DID NOT KNOW WHERE TO RUN AFTER LOSING THEIR FORTS.

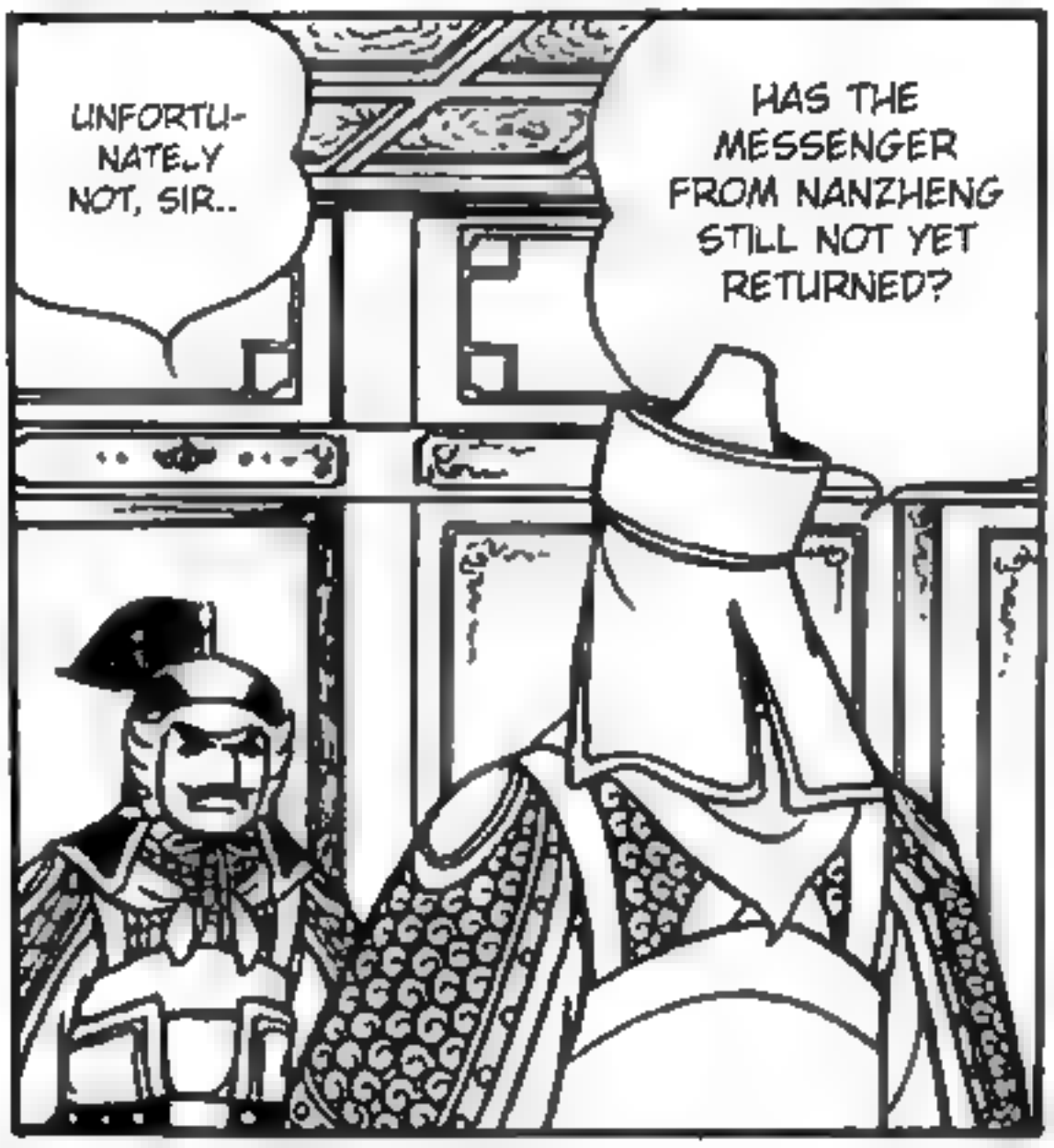

THEY WERE EASILY CUT DOWN

AND ONE BY ONE.


BY THE TIME ZHANG HE REACHED WAKOU PASS, HE HAD LOST 20,000 MEN, TWO-THIRDS OF HIS ARMY.

WAKOU PASS

WAKOU
PASS


UNFORTU-
NATELY
NOT, SIR..
HAS THE
MESSENGER
FROM NANZHENG
STILL NOT YET
RETURNED?

OH, GOOD.

GENERAL ZHANG HE, THE MESSENGER HAS RETURNED.

DAMN IT, I JUST NEED A LITTLE BIT OF REINFORCEMENTS TO BEAT ZHANG FEI ONCE AND FOR ALL...!

HE... SAID HE WOULDN'T SPARE ANY REINFORCEMENTS.

SO WHAT DID CAO HONG SAY?

HE SAID IT WAS SIR'S OWN IDEA TO IGNORE HIS "COWARDLY ADVICE" AND GO OUT ON THE ATTACK.

WHAT!?

OTHERWISE, HE'LL HAVE YOU BEAR THE FULL BRUNT OF THE LAW.

AND SINCE HE NEEDS ALL HIS FORCES TO PROPERLY DEFEND NANZHENG FROM MA CHAO, HE ANGRILY DEMANDED THAT YOU CLEAN UP YOUR OWN MESS.

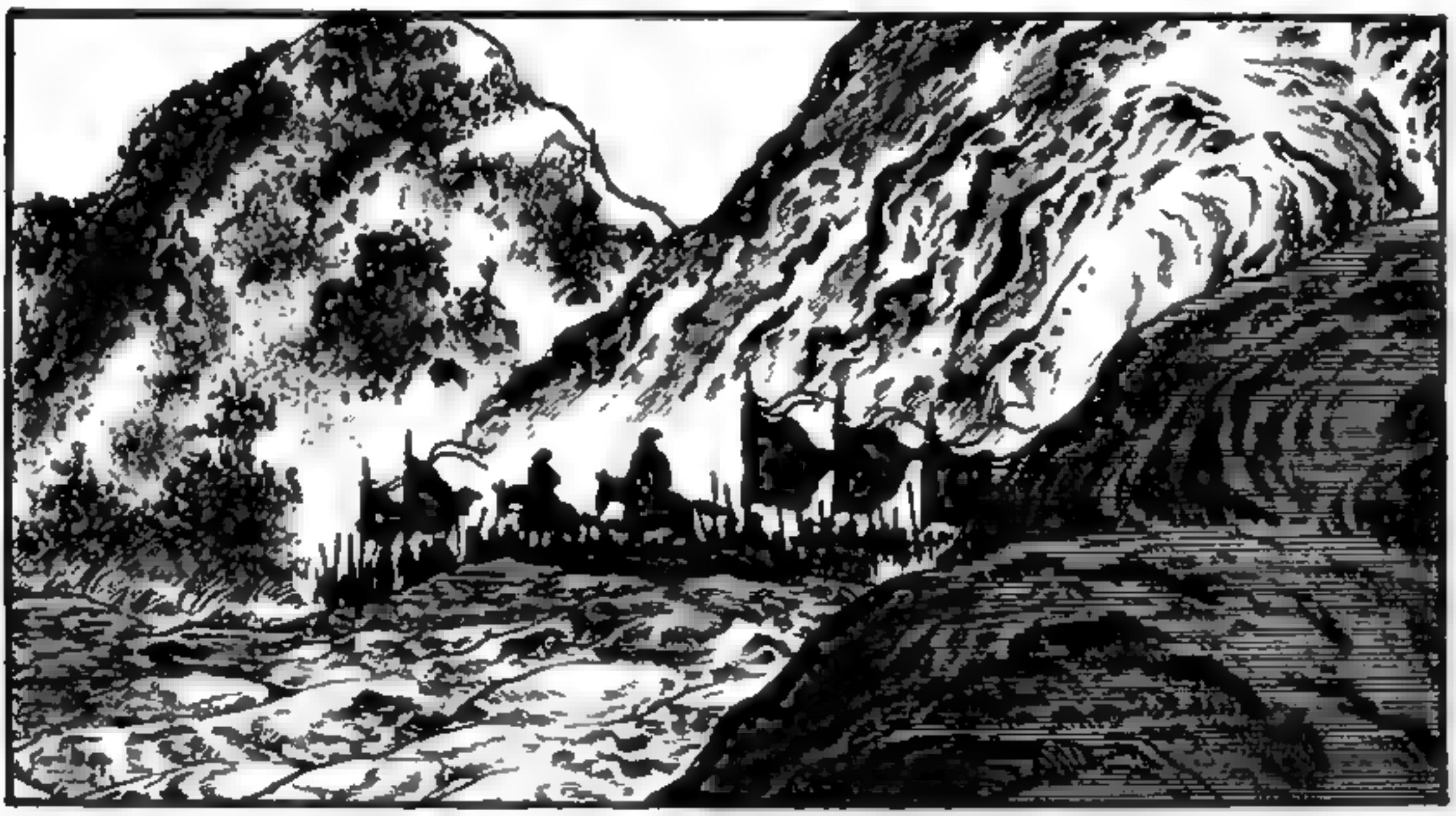
I'VE GOT TO COME UP WITH SOME STRATEGY THEN...

HM...

ENOUGH! I GET THE POINT!

YES, THAT MIGHT WORK...

張
THAT ZHANG HE STILL MUST BE NOT TIRED OF GETTING BEATEN, CHALLENGING US OUT IN THE OPEN LIKE THIS.



張
YES, GIVE THEM A GOOD THRASHING, LEI TONG.

ALLOW ME TO LEAD THE ATTACK, SIR.

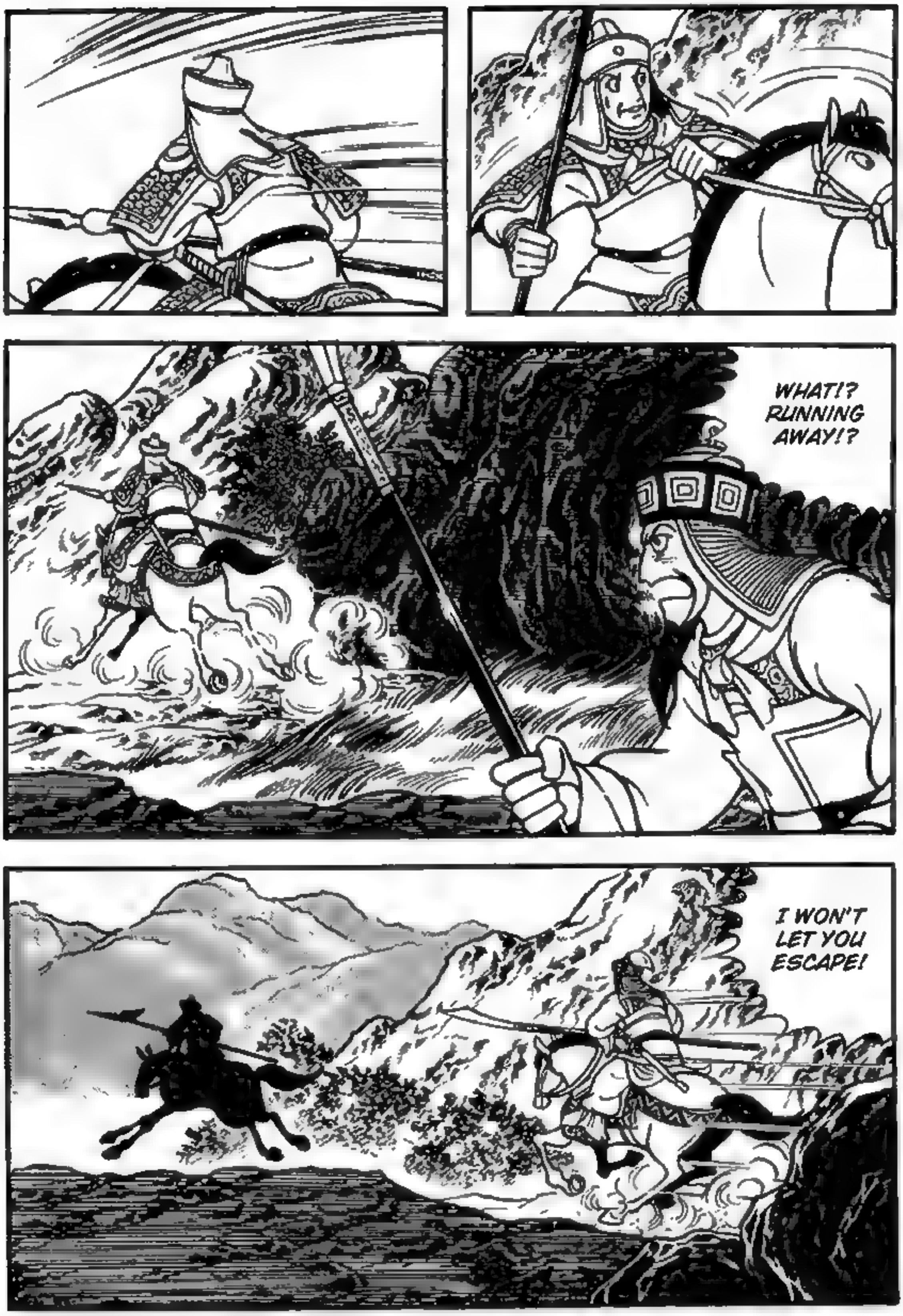
雷
雷
雷
ENEMY MORALE IS LOW! LET US CRUSH THEM SWIFTLY!

CHARGE!

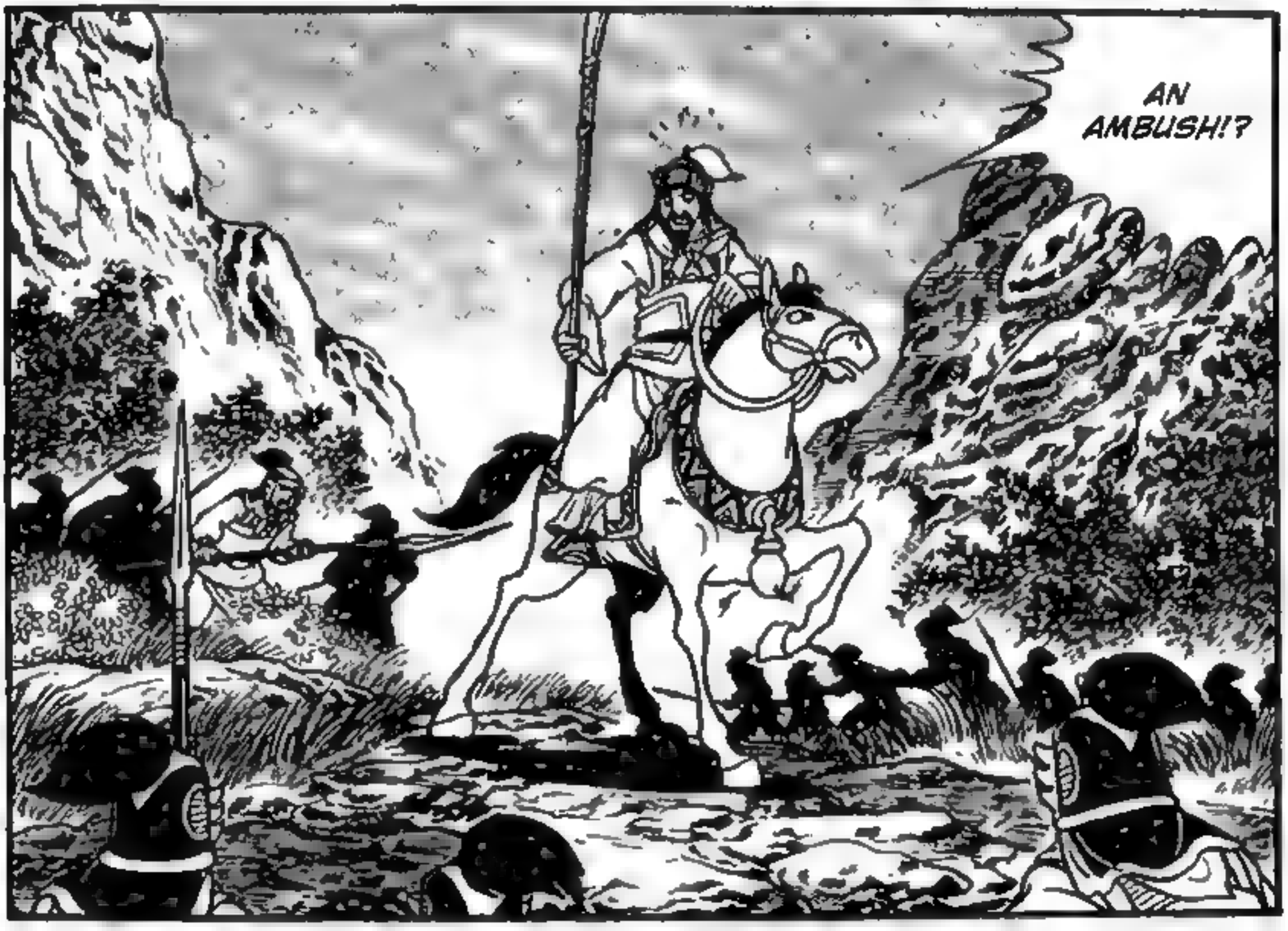
I AM HERE!
魏
張

WHERE ARE YOU, ZHANG HE!?

JUST MY WISH!
FIGHT ME!


WHAT!? RUNNING AWAY!?
I WON'T LET YOU ESCAPE!

NOW!


AN AMBUSH!?

ビュ
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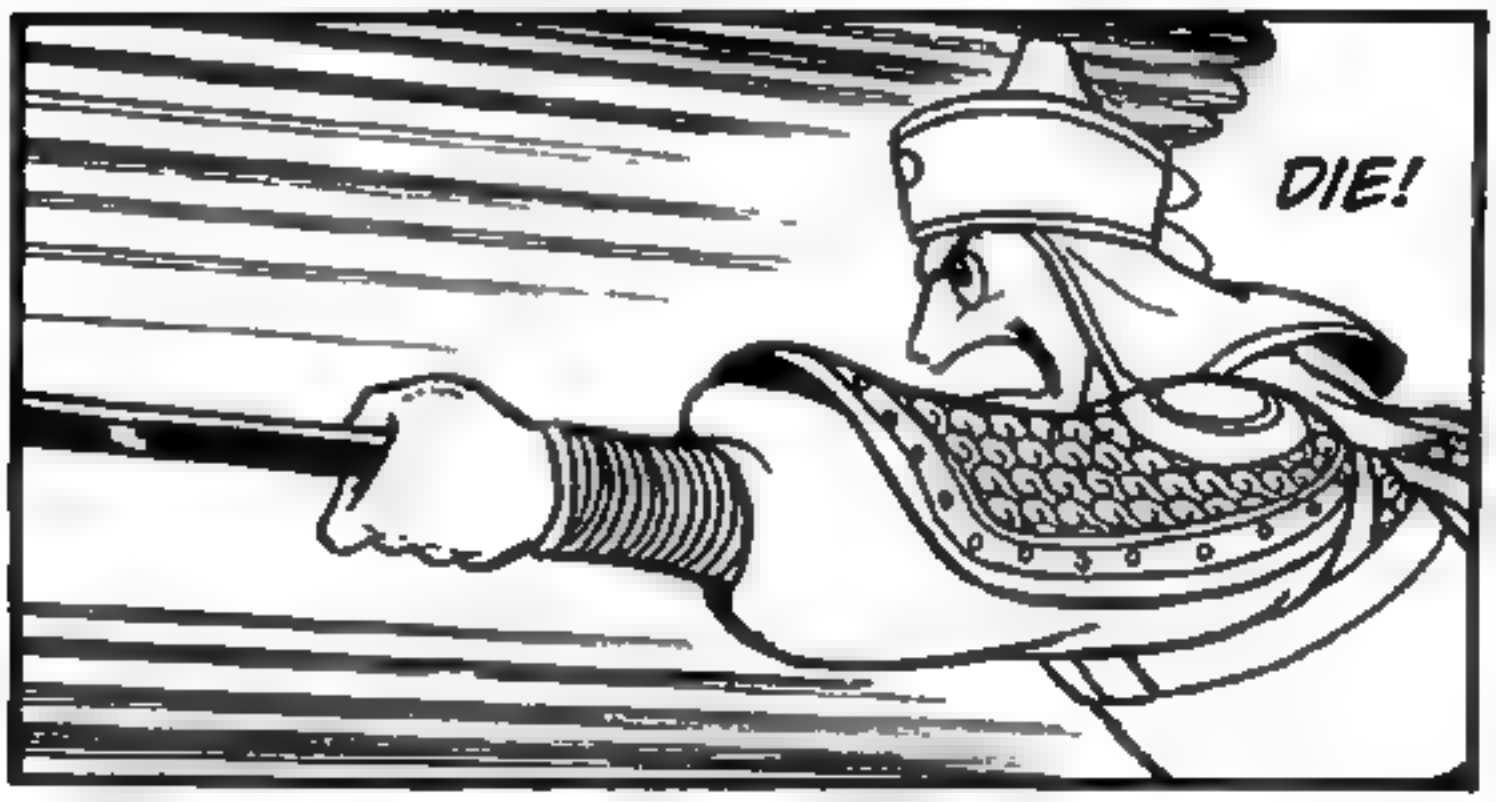
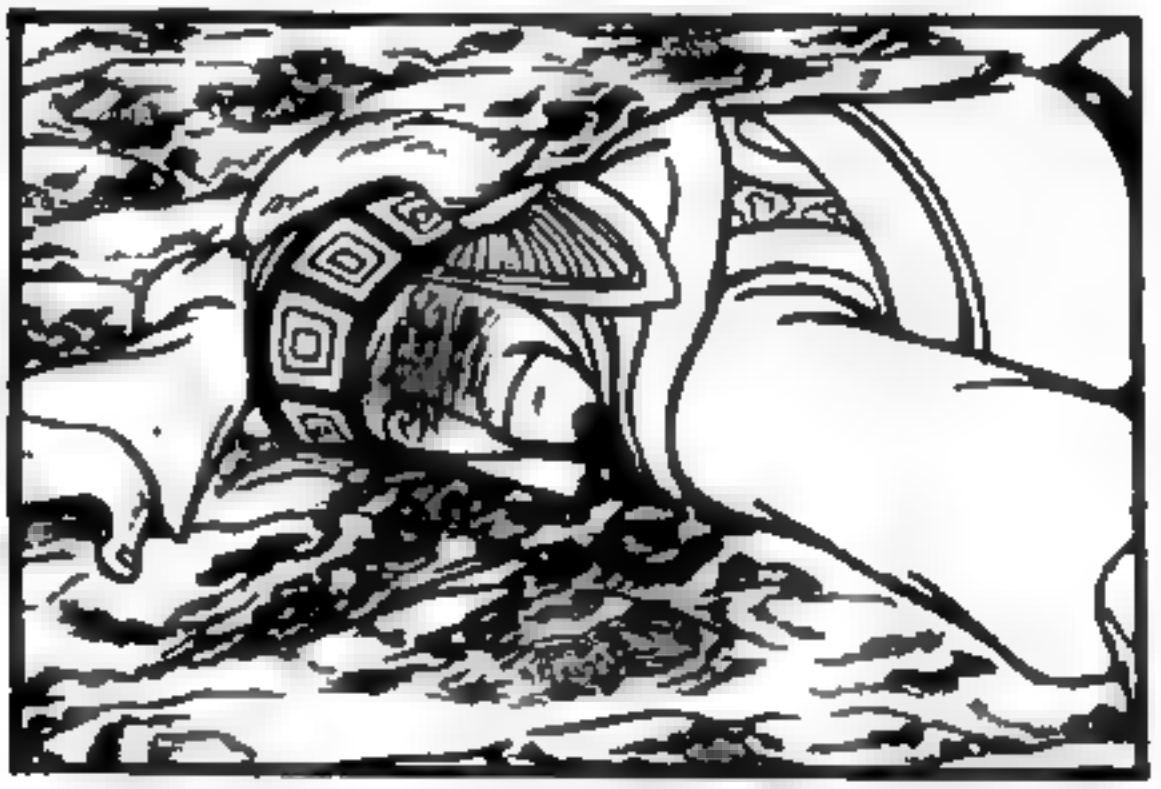
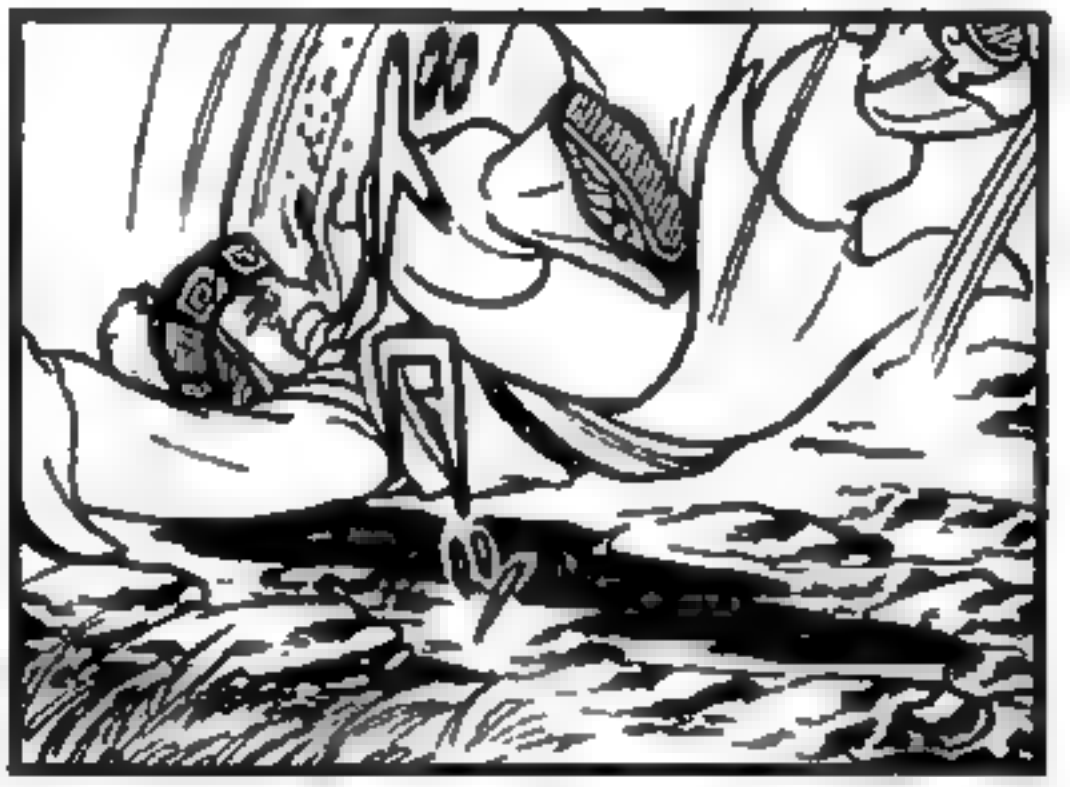
NGHH!

ビュウ

UGHH...


DIE!





GOOD.
ZHANG FEI
IS NEXT.

蜀

張

張

蜀

HE WAS LURED IN DEEP AND MET HIS END WHEN AMBUSHED WITH HIS RETREAT ROUTE CUT OFF.

WHAT!? LEI TONG WAS SLAIN!?

BUT I CAN'T ATTACK RASHLY IF HE'S RELYING ON AMBUSHES...

DAMN THAT ZHANG HE...

YES?

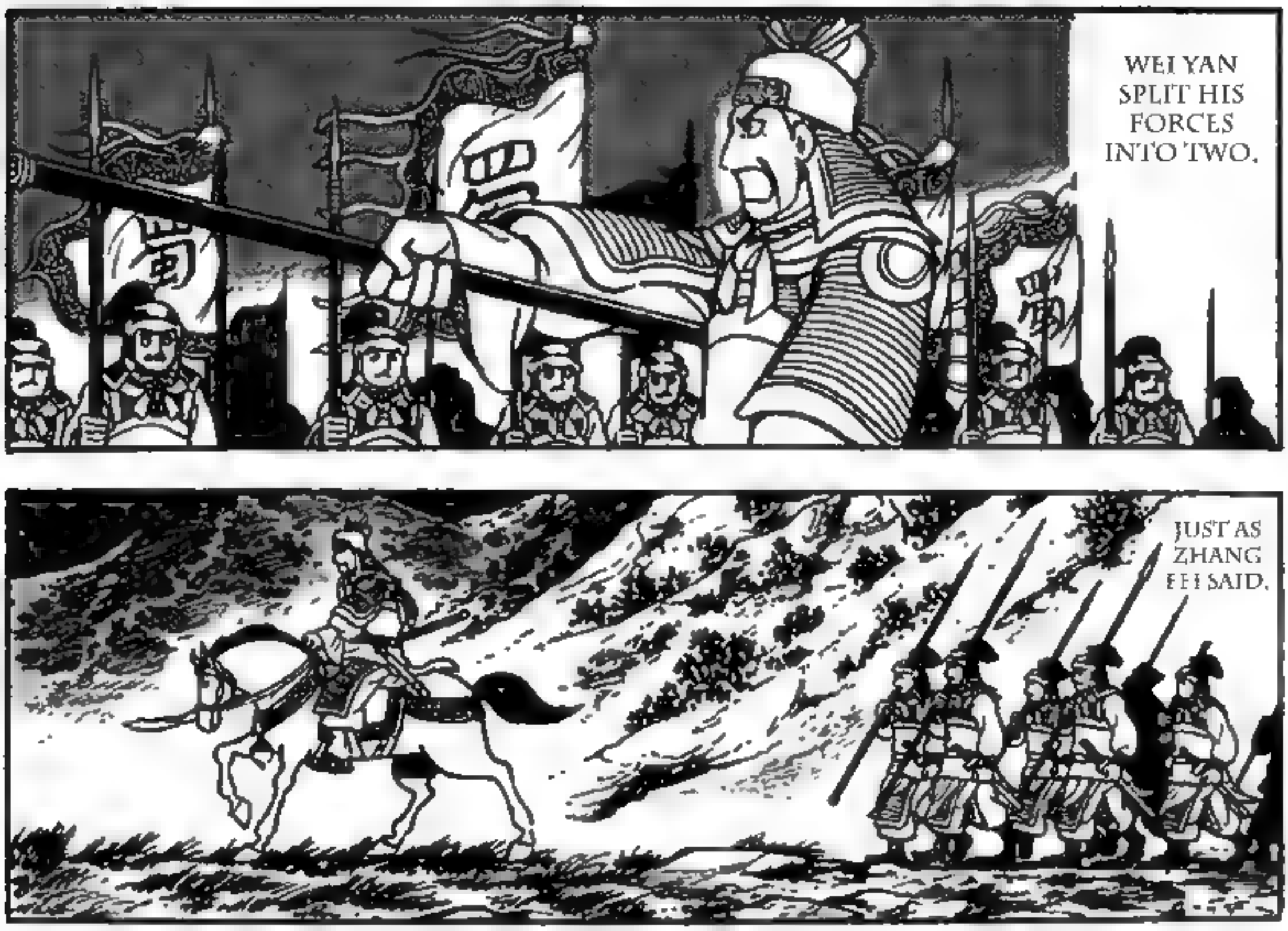
WEI YAN!

YES, SIR.

SPLIT YOUR FORCES INTO TWO. ONE WILL GO ALONG THE HILLS AND LOCATE THE ENEMY AMBUSH FORCE. THE OTHER WILL LOAD UP WAGONS WITH DRIED GRASS AND WOOD TO LIGHT ON FIRE AND BLOCK THE SIDE ROADS.

YES.

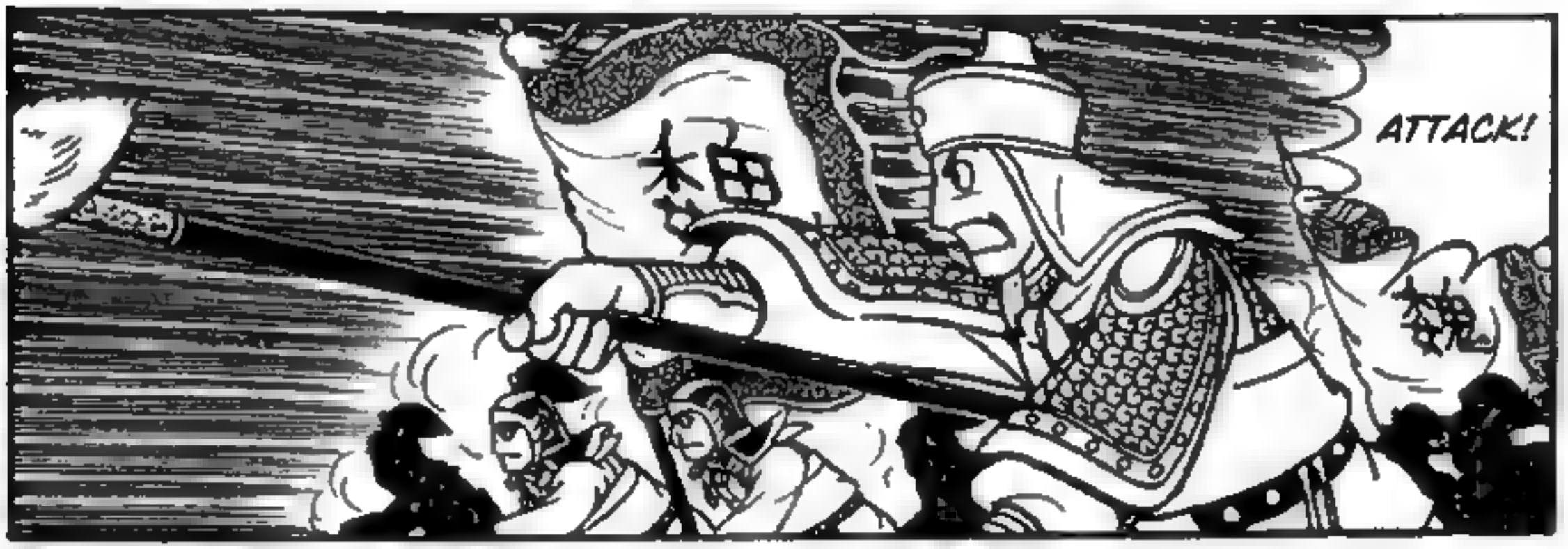
COMPLETE ALL PREPARATIONS BY TOMORROW MORNING. AS FOR ME, I'LL ATTACK FROM THE FRONT AND PRETEND TO FALL FOR ZHANG HE'S TRICK DURING BATTLE.

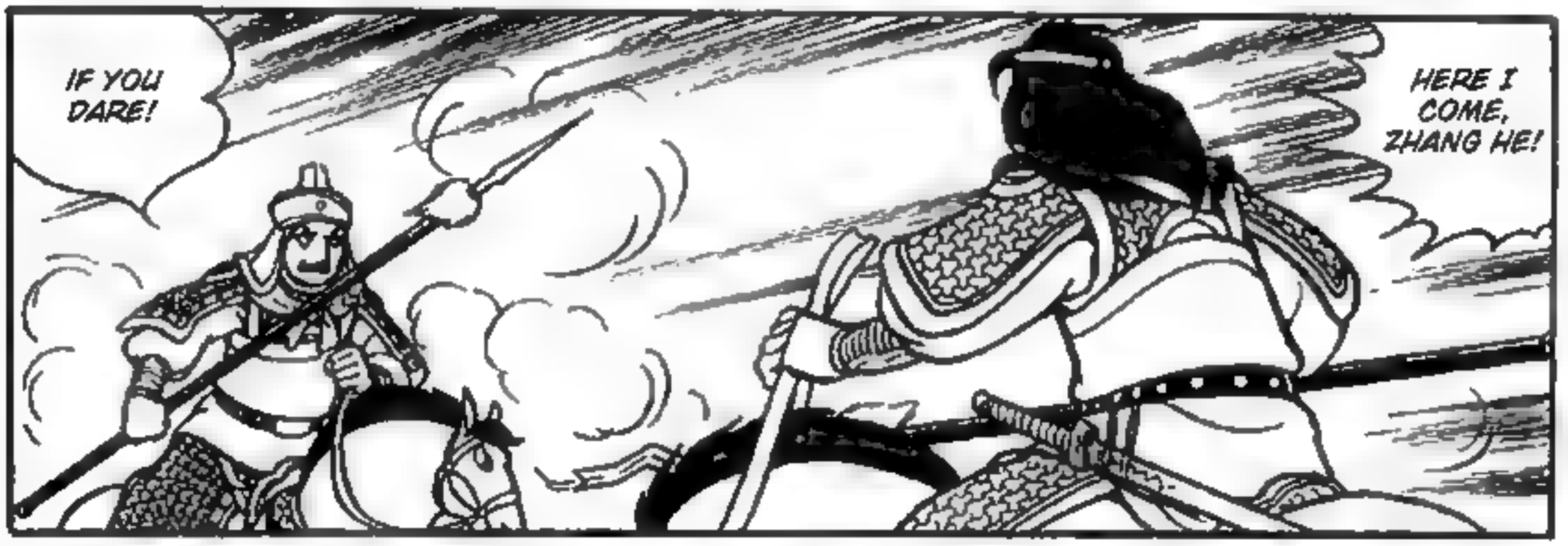

WEI YAN SPLIT HIS FORCES INTO TWO.
JUST AS ZHANG FEI SAID,
AND MADE PREPARATIONS TO TRAP THE ENEMY FORCES.

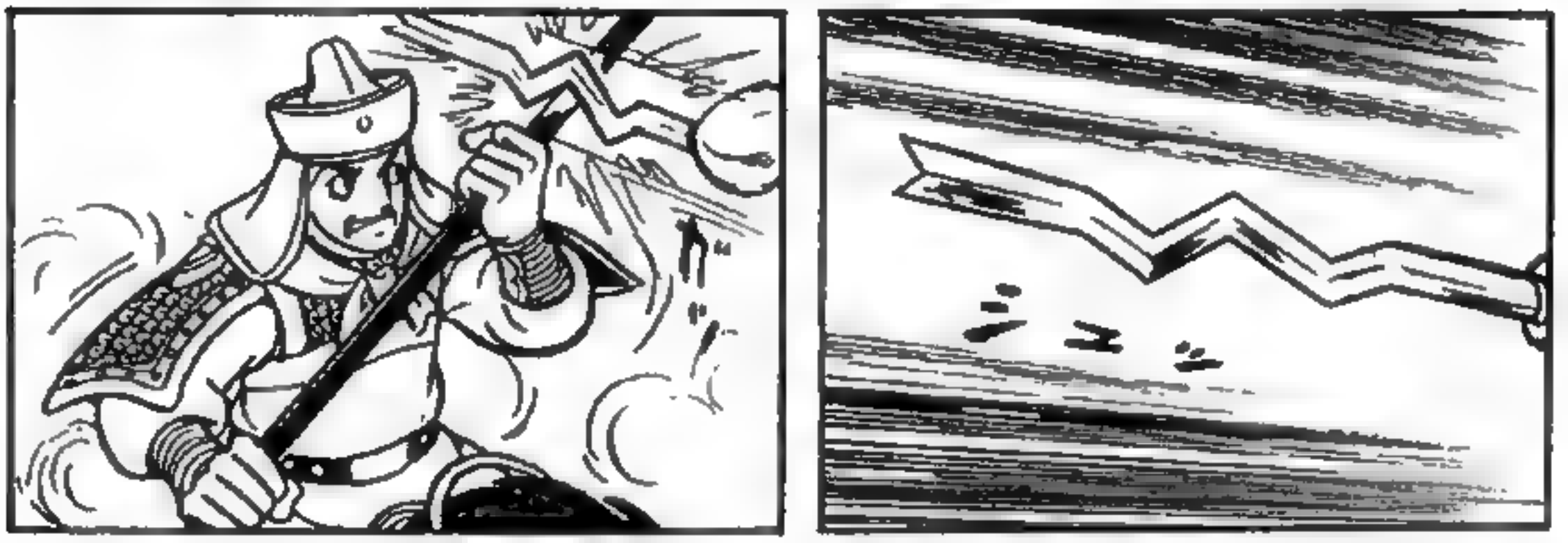
TODAY, WE'LL TAKE ZHANG FEI'S HEAD. THERE WILL BE NOTHING TO FEAR ONCE HE'S ELIMINATED.

張
蜀
HAHA... DON'T THINK WE'LL PLAY RIGHT INTO YOUR HANDS THIS TIME, ZHANG HE.
張

ATTACK!


ATTACK!


IF YOU DARE!
HERE I COME, ZHANG HE!



H-HE'S BEYOND WHAT EVEN THE RUMOURS SAY...!

FLEEING ALREADY? WAIT!

CHASE ME IF YOU CAN!

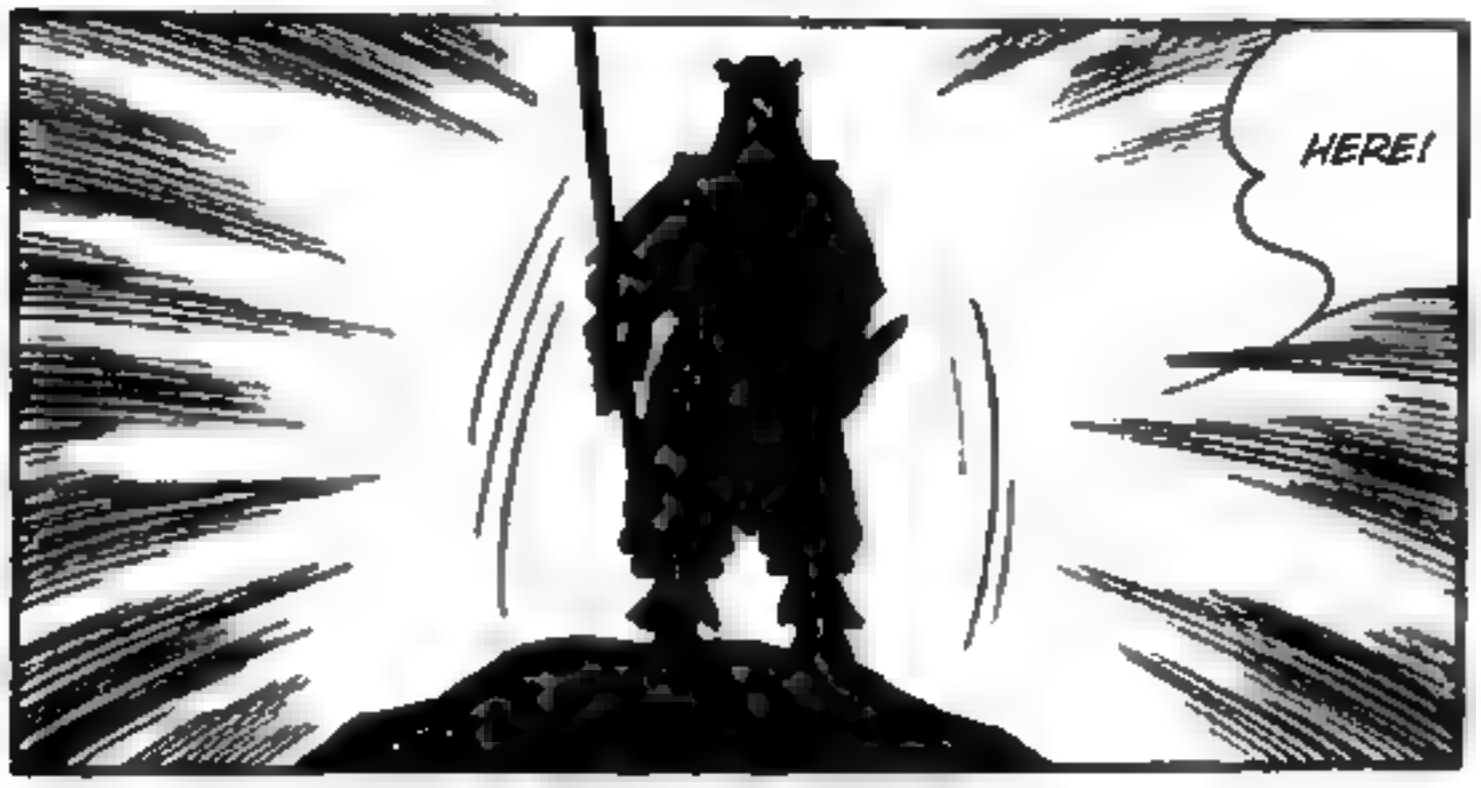
GOOD, HE FELL FOR IT!

I'LL CHASE YOU UNTIL I TAKE YOUR HEAD!

NOW!

WEI YAN!

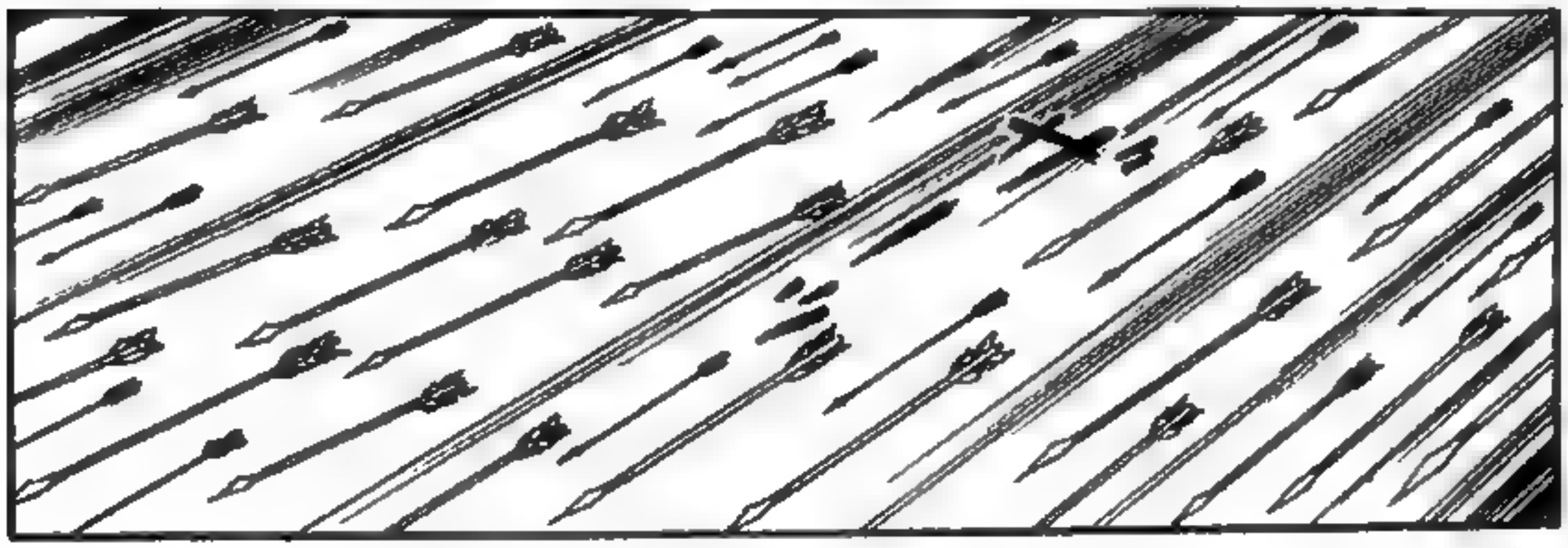
SO THIS IS WHERE YOU WERE HIDING'EM...


HERE!

ATTACK!

AHH!

AHHH!



UGHH!

GAHH!

CURSES! THE ENEMY SET UP AN AMBUSH OF THEIR OWN! RETREAT!

AHH!

WE NEED TO FIND ANOTHER PATH!

AHH!

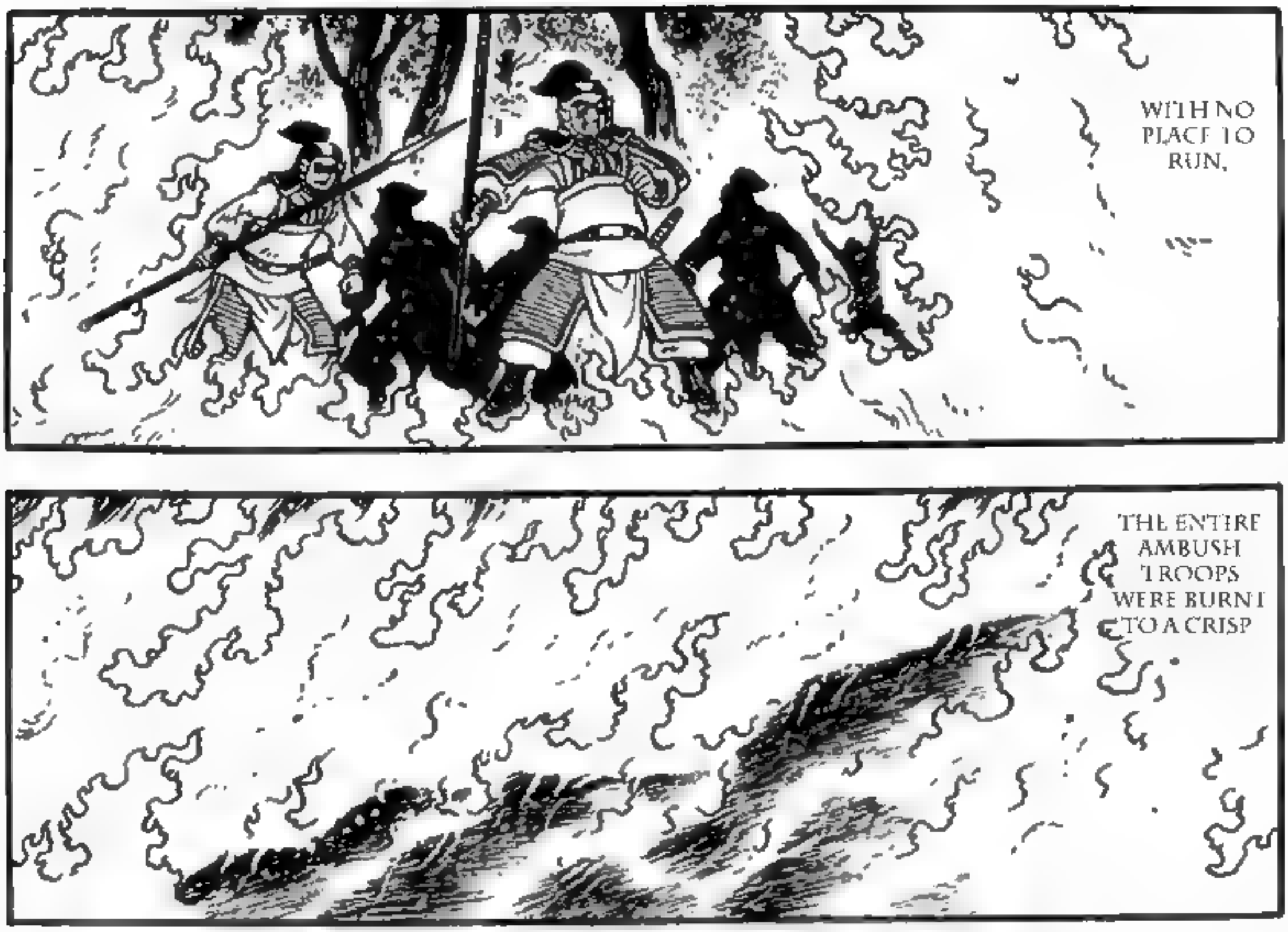
THEY'VE CUT OFF ALL OUR PATHS...

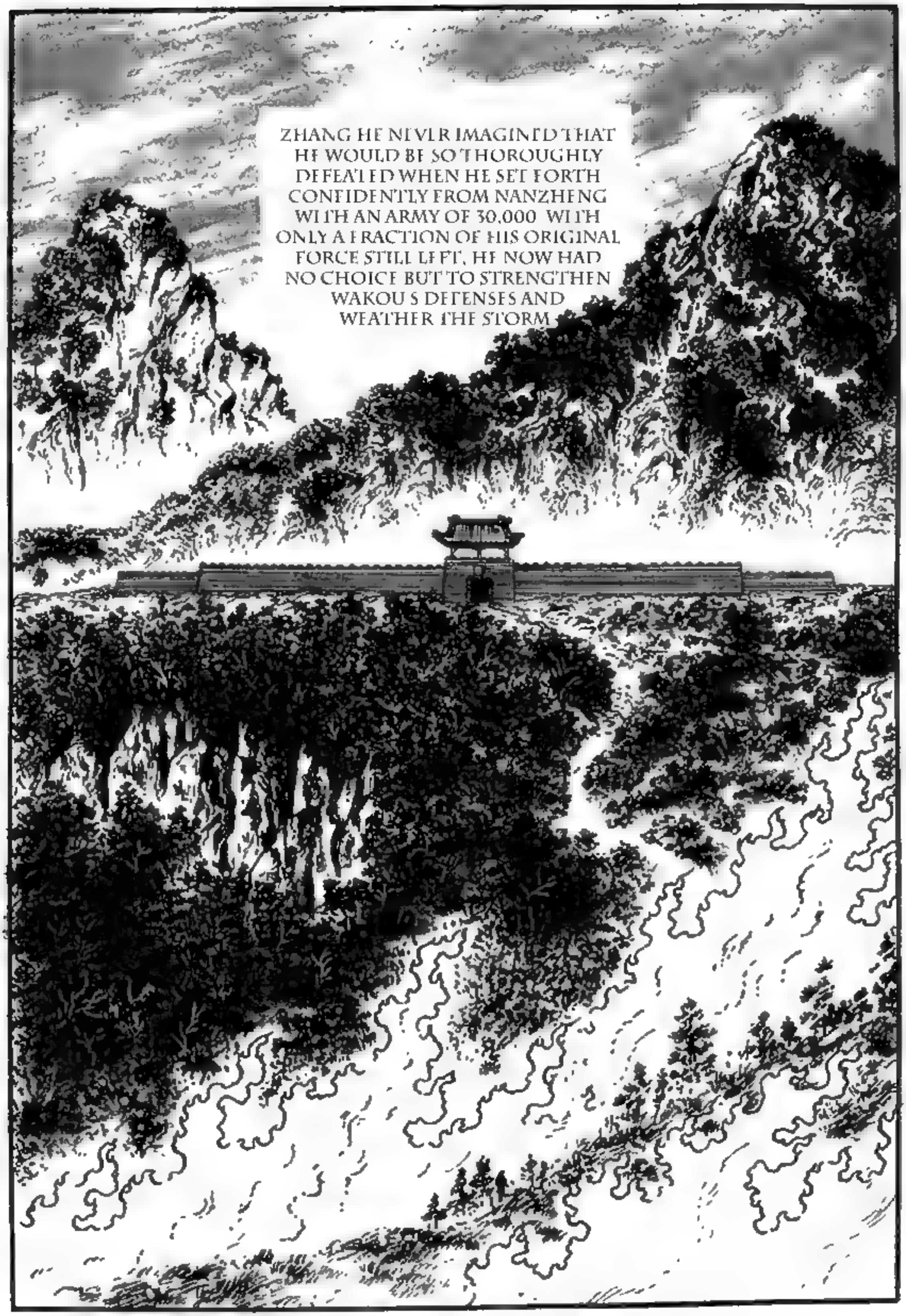
RUN!

AGHH!

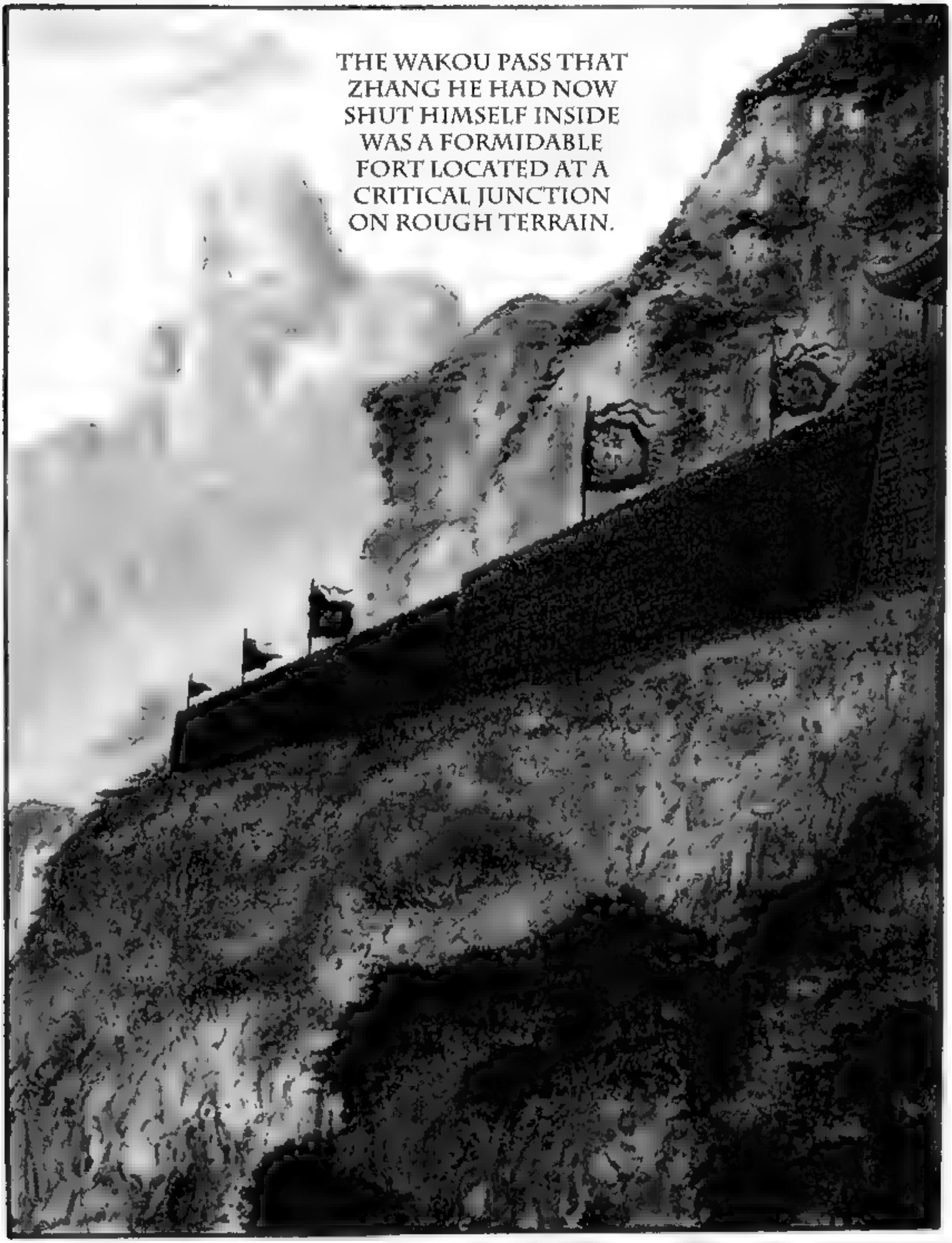
ZHANG HE'S
TROOPS HAD
NO CHOICE
BUT TO
STRAY FROM
THE TRAILS
AND INTO
THE WOODS

BUT THE
FLAMES
QUICKLY
TURNED
THE FOREST
INTO A SEA
OF FIRE


WITH NO PLACE TO RUN,
THE ENTIRE AMBUSH TROOPS WERE BURNT TO A CRISP
ONLY ZHANG HE AND A FRACTION OF HIS FORCE MANAGED TO RETURN TO WAKOU PASS
交


ZHANG HE NEVER IMAGINED THAT
HE WOULD BE SO THOROUGHLY
DEFEATED WHEN HE SET FORTH
CONFIDENTLY FROM NANZHENG
WITH AN ARMY OF 30,000. WITH
ONLY A FRACTION OF HIS ORIGINAL
FORCE STILL LEFT, HE NOW HAD
NO CHOICE BUT TO STRENGTHEN
WAKOU'S DEFENSES AND
WEATHER THE STORM.

SHORTCUT


THE WAKOU PASS THAT
ZHANG HE HAD NOW
SHUT HIMSELF INSIDE
WAS A FORMIDABLE
FORT LOCATED AT A
CRITICAL JUNCTION
ON ROUGH TERRAIN.

BRING ME MY HORSE!

IT'S EVERY BIT AS FORMIDABLE AS I HEARD... I CAN'T ATTACK CARELESSLY.

YES, SIR!

YES. I'M GOING TO GO FAMILIARIZE MYSELF WITH THE LOCAL GEOGRAPHY. WAKOU PASS ISN'T ONE WE CAN CAPTURE WITH A SIMPLE FRONTAL ASSAULT.

ARE YOU HEADING OUT?

SURE.

THEN I'LL ACCOMPANY YOU.

IS THERE REALLY NO ALTERNATIVE TO ATTACKING FROM THE FRONT?

THIS IS SOME HARSH TERRAIN...

HM!?

HM?

LOOK, WEI YAN. THOSE PEASANTS OVER THERE HOLD OUR KEY TO CAPTURING WAKOU PASS.

HM...

YES, SIR.

SOMEONE GO CALL THOSE PEASANTS OVER HERE.

AH, HERE THEY COME.

GOOD WORK.

I HAVE BROUGHT THEM HERE AS YOU ORDERED, GENERAL.

WE ARE MEN OF HANZHONG AND ARE CURRENTLY TRYING TO RETURN HOME. SEEING AS HOW THIS REGION BECAME A BATTLEFIELD, WE DECIDED TO TAKE A SHORTCUT BY CLIMBING THESE HILLS.

FOR WHAT REASON DO YOU CLIMB THESE STEEP HILLS?

YES, THERE'S A TRAIL JUST BEHIND THE ZITONG HILLS

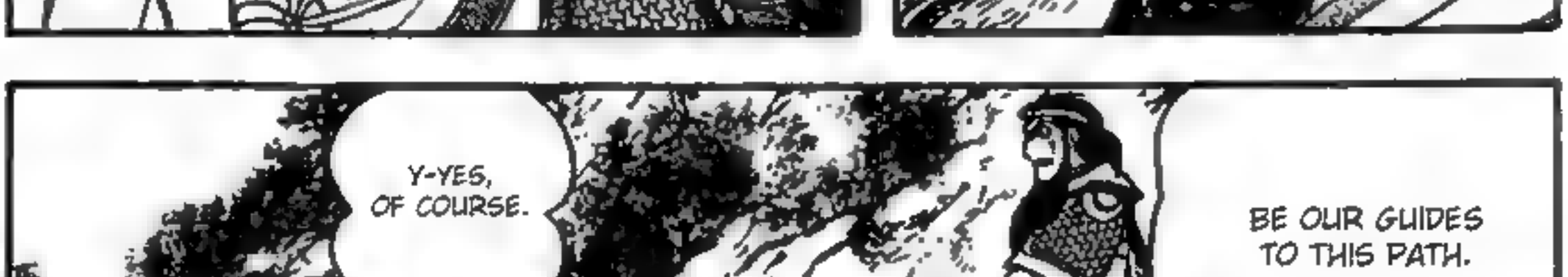
IS THERE A PATH BEYOND THESE HILLS?

IT'S ACTUALLY CONNECTED TO THE REAR ENTRANCE OF WAKOU PASS.

AND HOW FAR IS THAT TRAIL FROM WAKOU PASS?

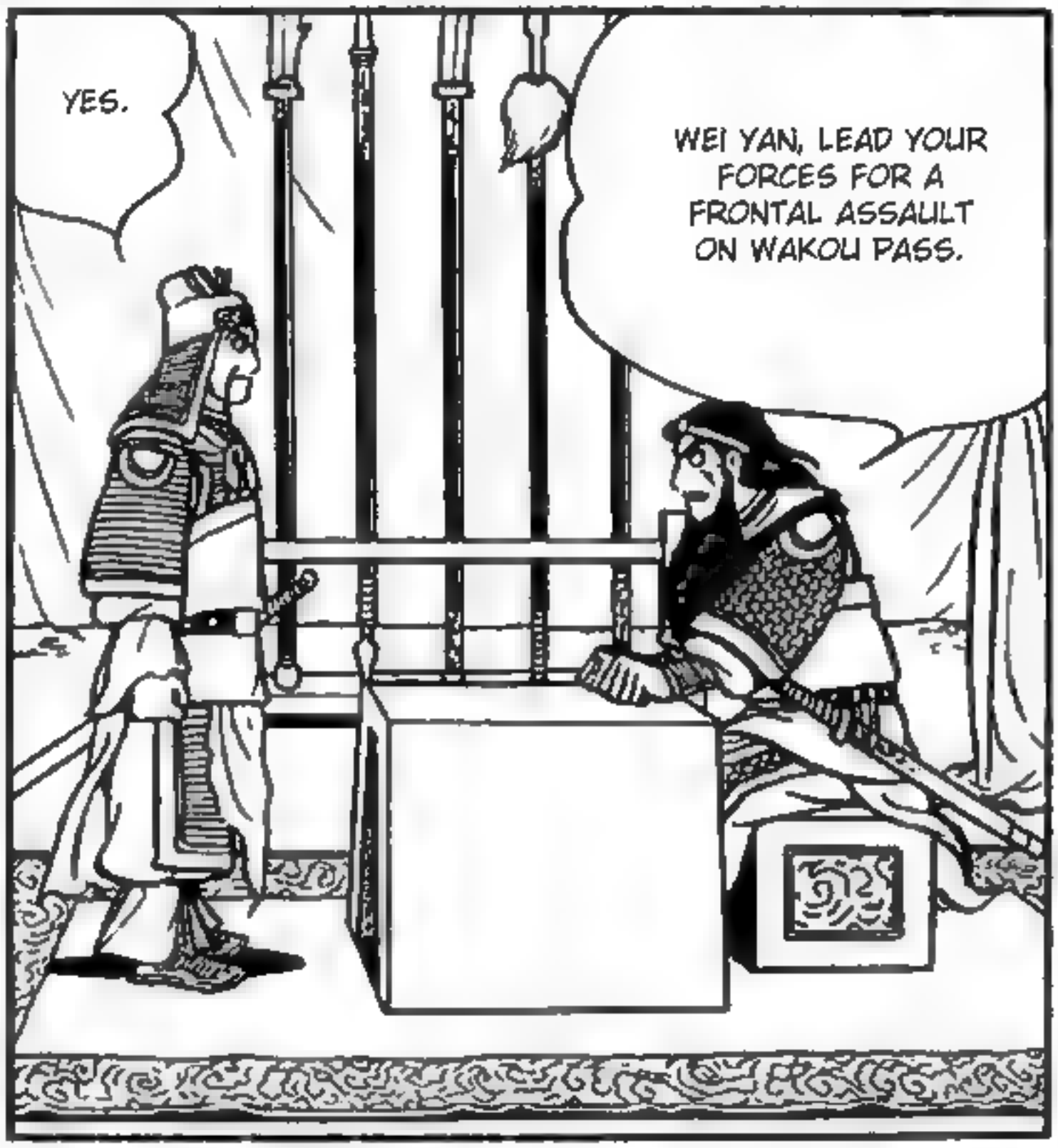
YES?
I HAVE A REQUEST.

OH, IS THAT SO...?

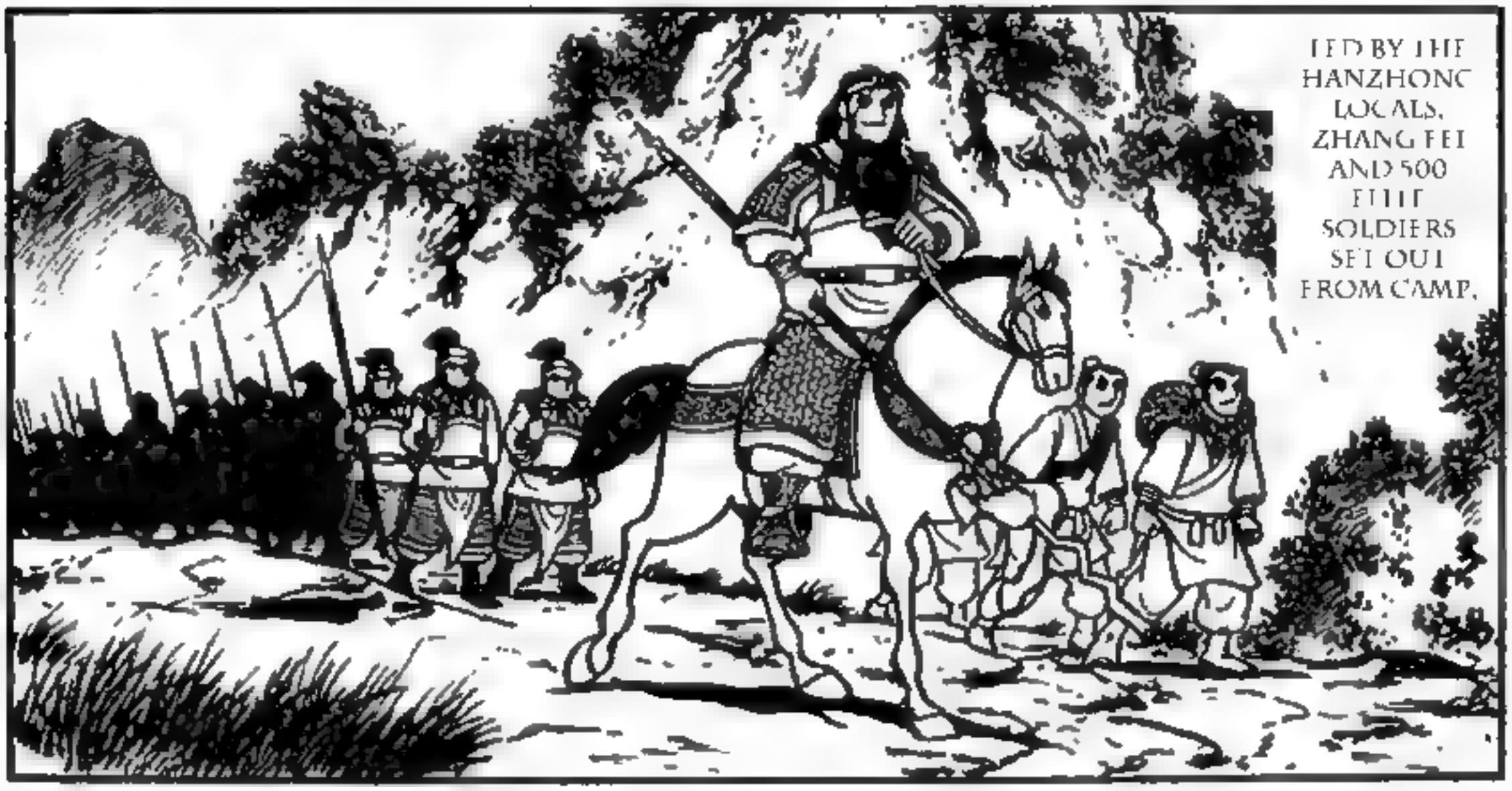

Y-YES, OF COURSE.
BE OUR GUIDES TO THIS PATH.

GOOD, LET US RETURN TO CAMP QUICKLY.

THAT ZHANG HE'S OVERCONFIDENT ABOUT WAKOU PASS' DEFENSES. HE'LL SURELY SALLY FORTH BRIEFLY AND HOLE UP BACK INSIDE AS USUAL.


YES.
WEI YAN, LEAD YOUR FORCES FOR A FRONTAL ASSAULT ON WAKOU PASS.

EXCELLENT PLAN.
BUT THAT'S PRECISELY WHEN I'LL ATTACK FROM THE REAR, USING THOSE PEASANTS AS GUIDES.


LED BY THE
HANZHONG
LOCALS,
ZHANG FEI
AND 500
ELITE
SOLDIERS
SET OUT
FROM CAMP.

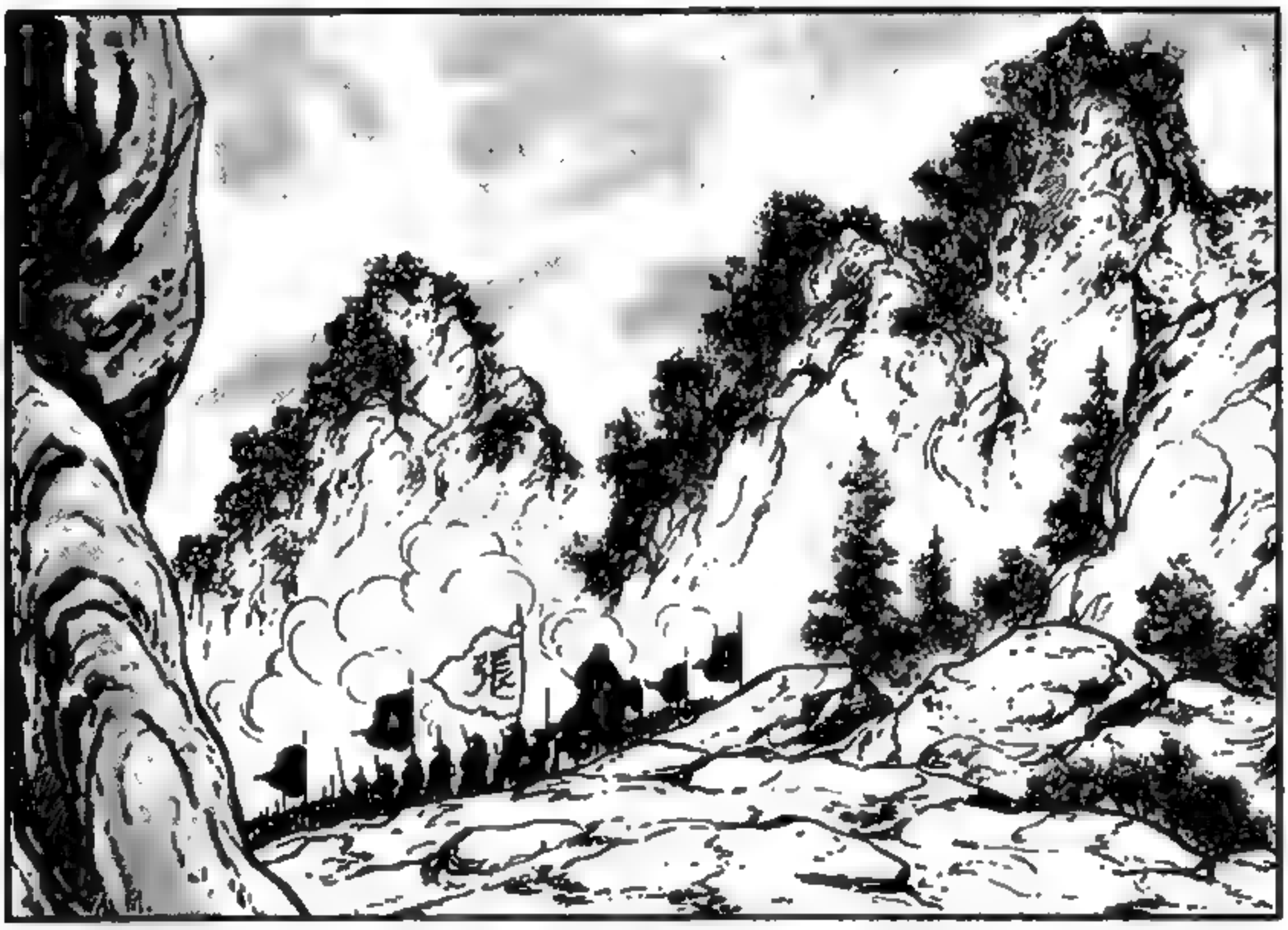
IN ORDER TO
STRIKE THE
REAR OF
WAKOU PASS

WHAT!?

ENEMY FORCES ARE MOUNTING A FRONTAL ATTACK!

SIR!

AHH!

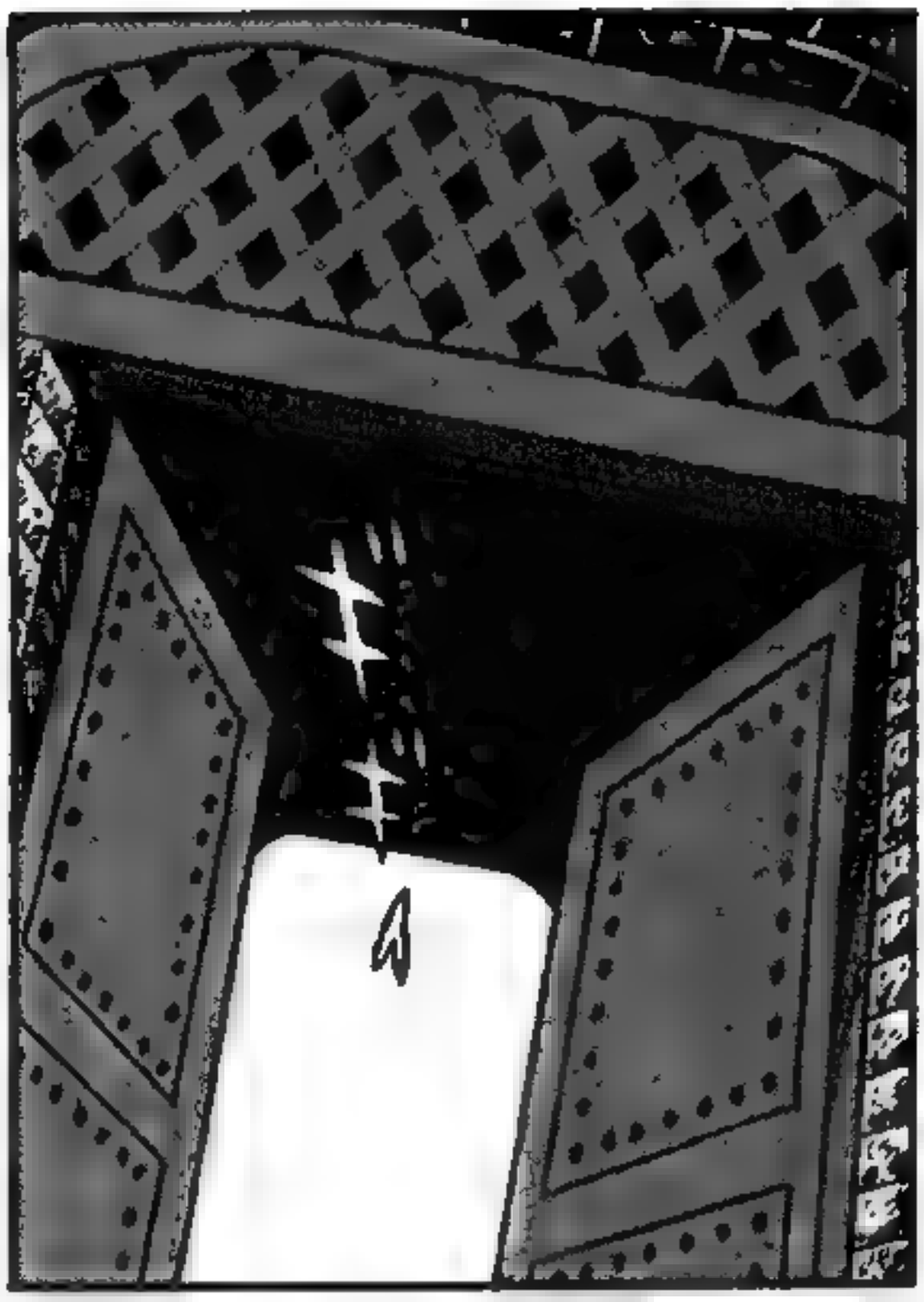

張

ARE YOU SALLYING FORTH, SIR?
GET ONE DIVISION PREPARED FOR BATTLE.

IDIOTIC BUNCH. CAN'T THEY EVER REALIZE THEY'LL NEVER TAKE WAKOU PASS WITH REPEATED FRONTAL ASSAULTS?

YES, SIR.
SAME PLAN AS USUAL. A SWIFT ATTACK FOLLOWED BY AN EQUALLY SWIFT RETREAT BACK INSIDE.

CHARGE!

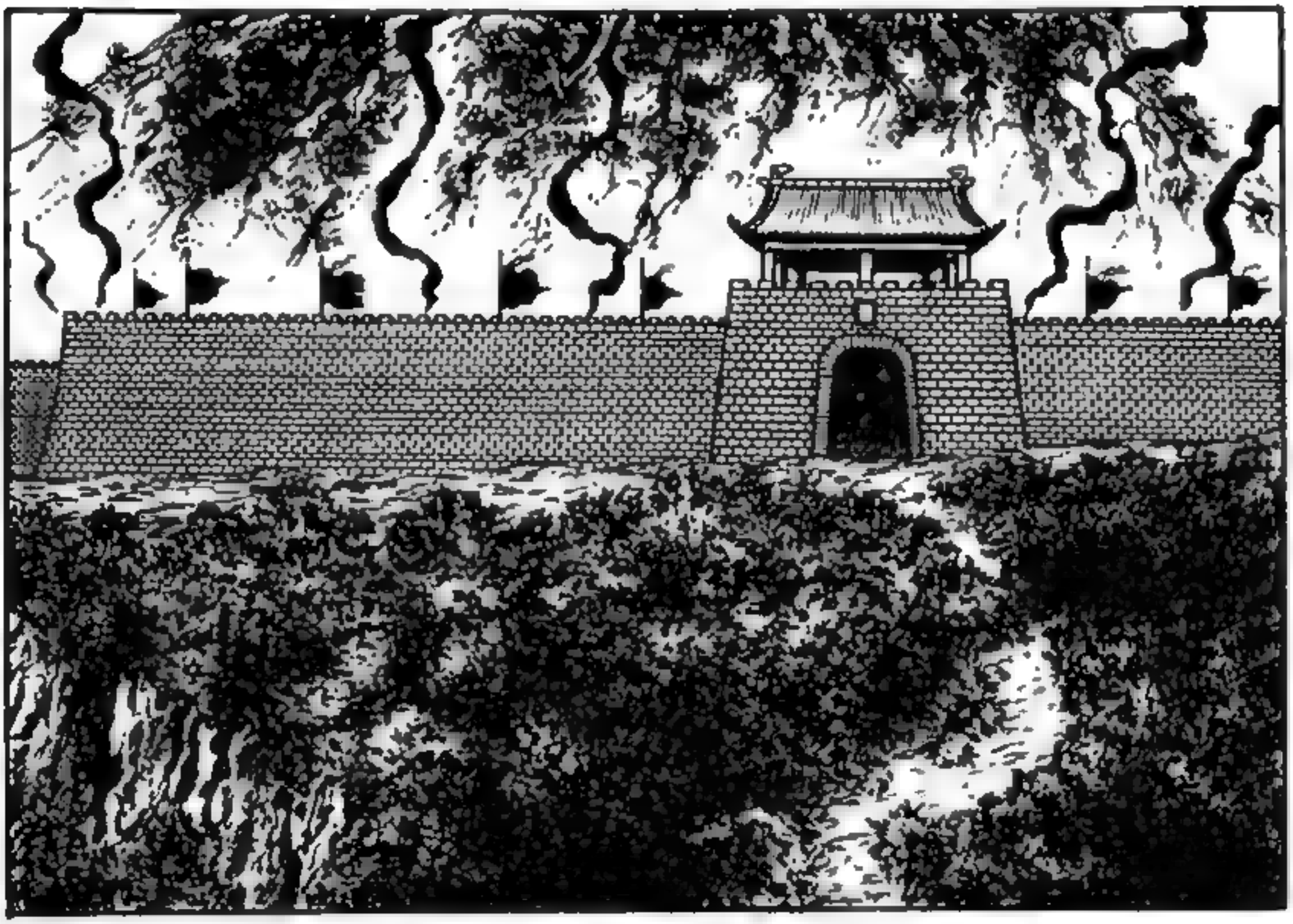


THE REAR ENTRANCE OF WAKOU PASS IS UNDER ATTACK! THE PASS IS ALREADY LIT AFLAME AT SEVERAL PLACES!

WHAT'S THE MATTER!?
GENERAL! IT'S AN EMERGENCY!

AHH!

WHAT!



HEAD BACK TO WAKOU PASS!

AHH!

HA HA HA HA

HA HA HA

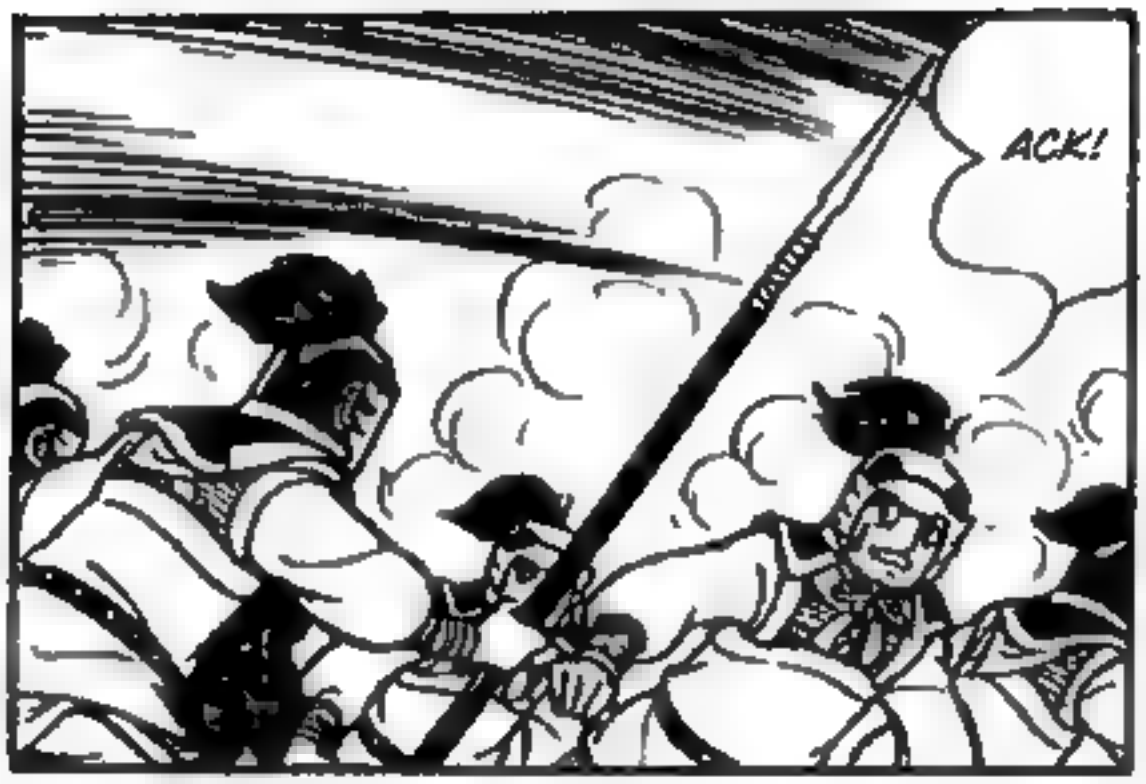
OPEN THE GATES! THIS IS YOUR GENERAL, ZHANG HE!

W-WHA? BUT HOW!?

DURING YOUR ABSENCE, ZHANG FEI HAS TAKEN CONTROL OF WAKOU PASS!

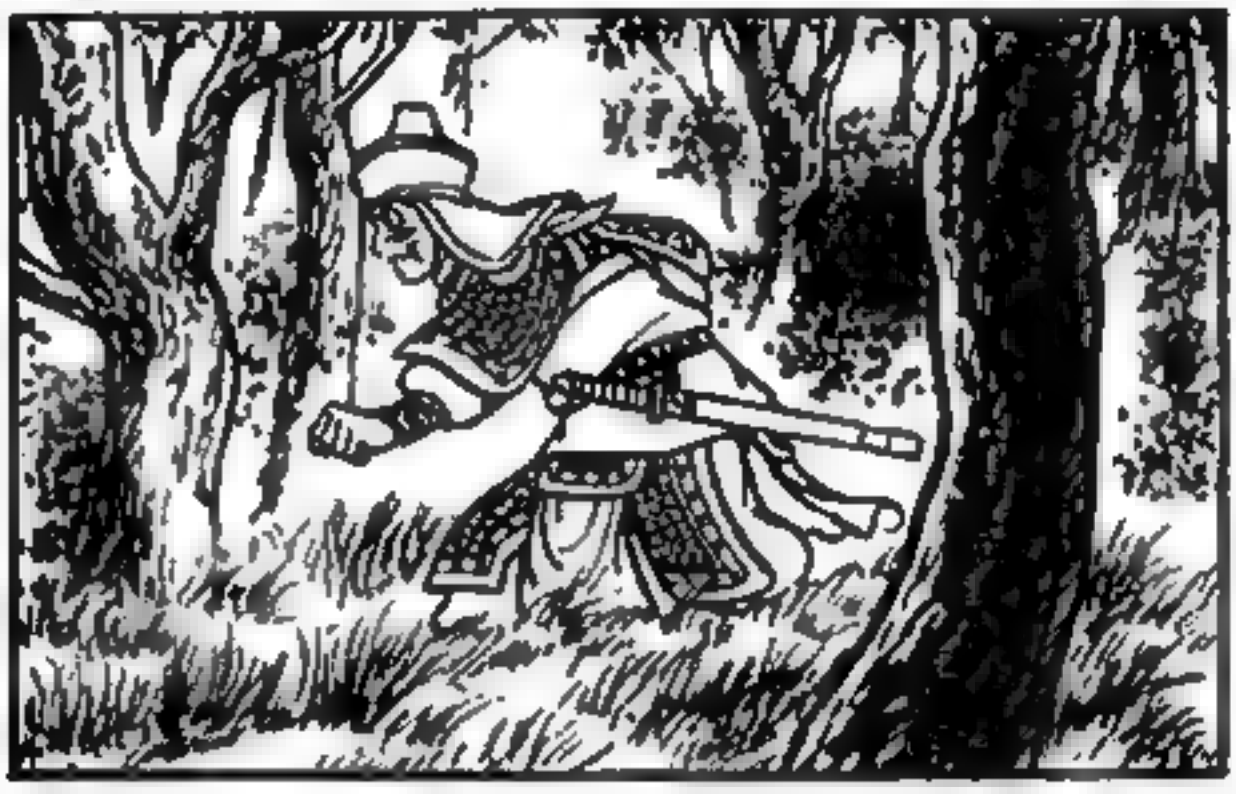
YOU'RE NOW TRAPPED BETWEEN MY FORCES.

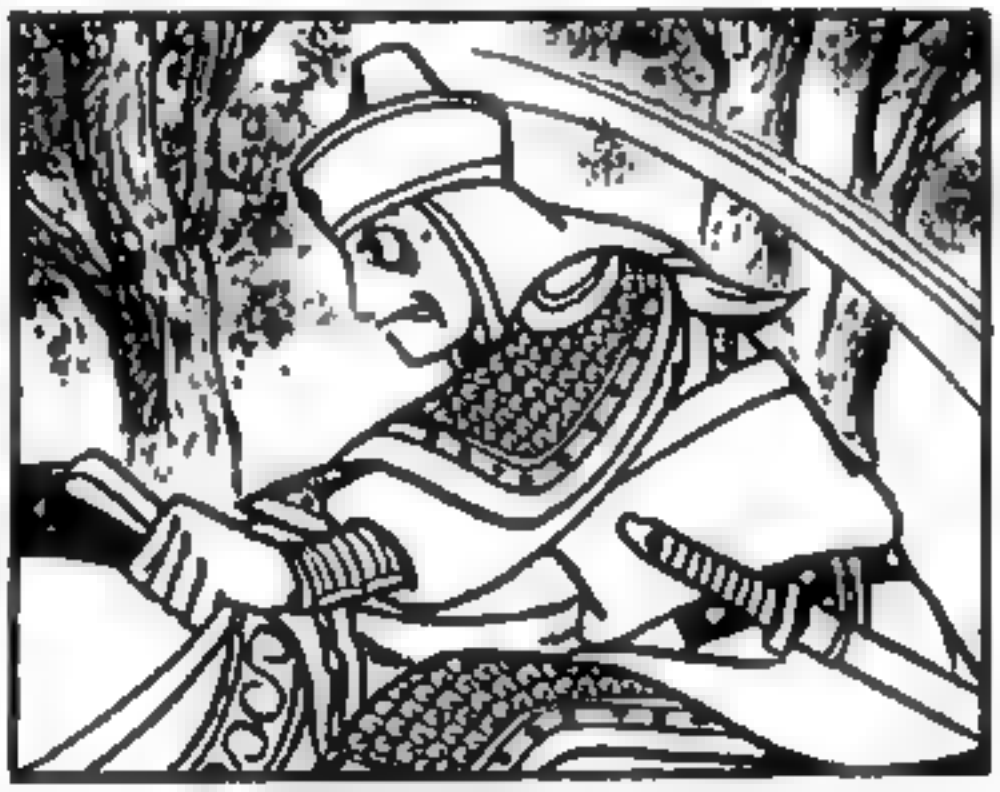
TIME TO TAKE ZHANG HE'S HEAD!


ACK!

AGHH!

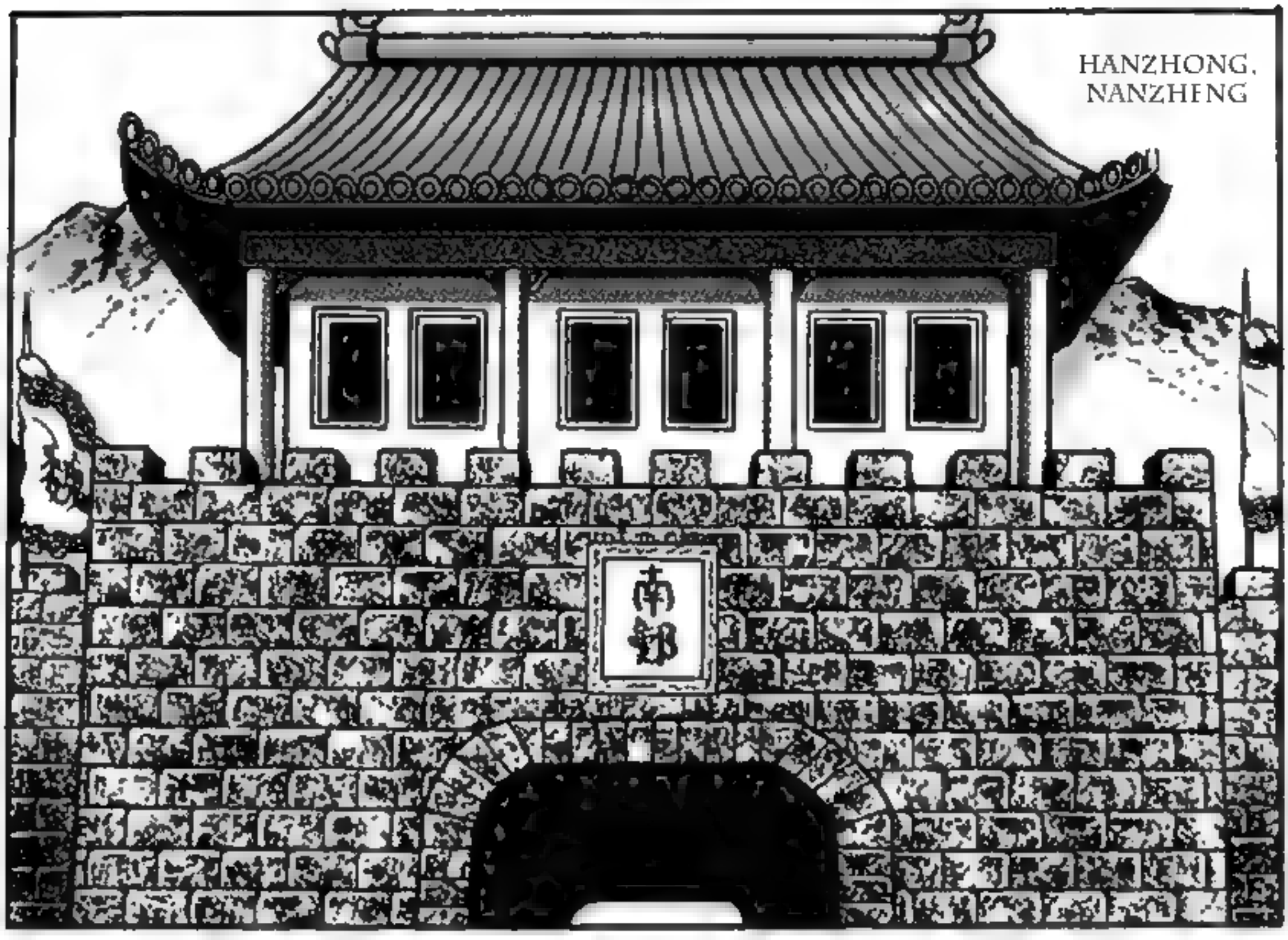
DAMN IT, MY HORSE IS USELESS HERE!

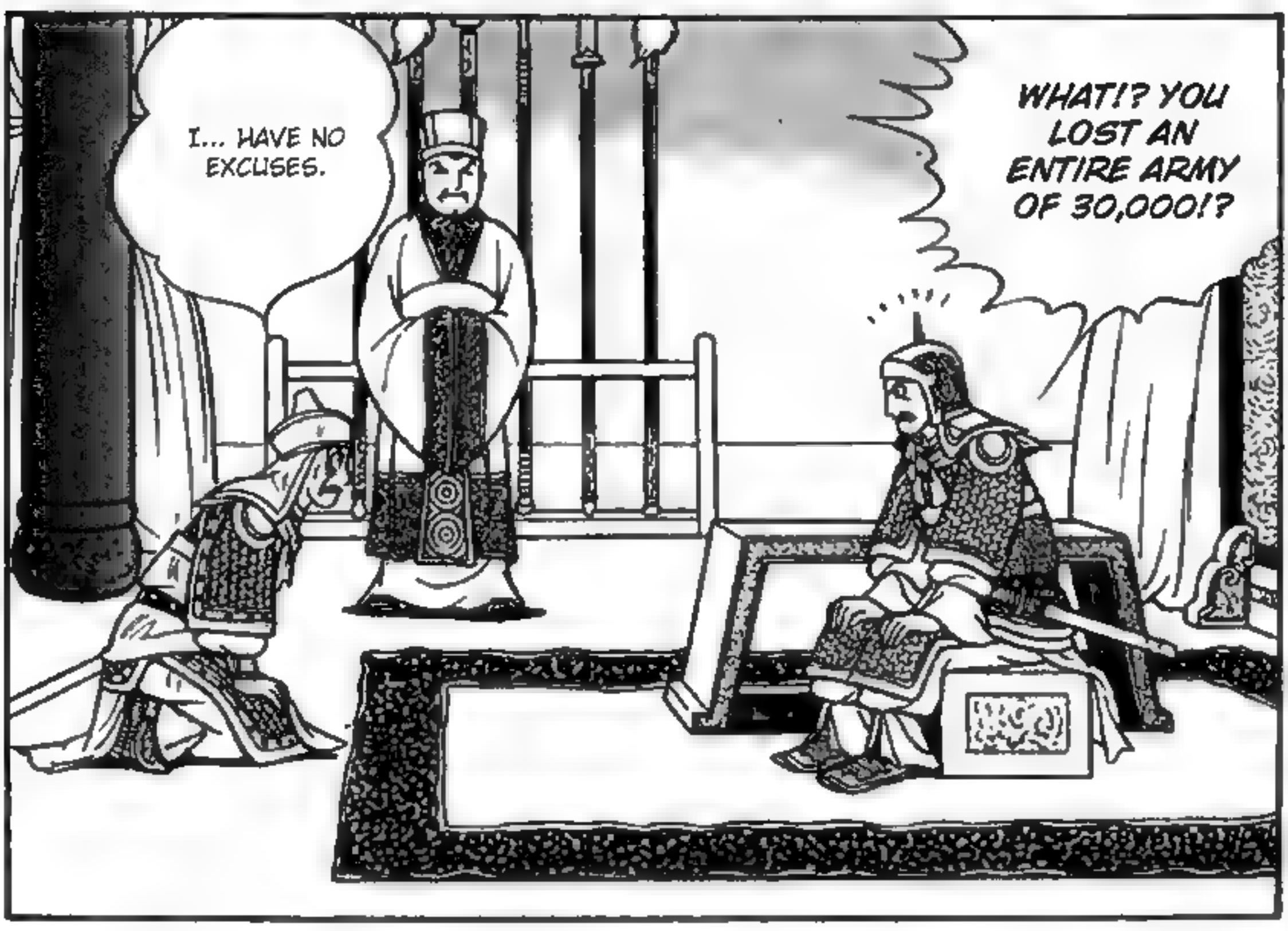




DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE! HE MUST BE NEARBY!

WHERE'D ZHANG HE GO!?


HANZHONG,
NANZHENG


I... HAVE NO EXCUSES.
WHAT!? YOU LOST AN ENTIRE ARMY OF 30,000!?

YES...

I PRESUME YOU STILL REMEMBER YOUR PROMISE TO ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY, YES!?

SO AFTER ALL MY WARNINGS, YOU NOT ONLY MARCHED OUT FOR A SERIES OF POINTLESS BATTLES BUT YOU LOST YOUR ENTIRE ARMY WITH YOU AS THE ONLY SURVIVOR!?

EXECUTE ZHANG HE!

IT IS TRUE THAT ZHANG HE IS AT FAULT FOR UNDERESTIMATING ZHANG FEI.

P-PLEASE CALM DOWN, COMMANDER CAO HONG.

FURTHERMORE, I REMIND YOU THAT ZHANG HE IS A FAVOURITE OF THE PRINCE OF WEI. INSTEAD OF EXECUTING HIM, I RECOMMEND YOU GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO REDEEM HIMSELF.

BUT AS THE OLD ADAGE GOES, "THREE ARMIES ARE EASY TO RAISE, BUT ONE LEADER IS DIFFICULT TO FIND."

YES, SIR. HOW ABOUT GIVING 5000 TROOPS TO ZHANG HE TO CAPTURE JIAMENG PASS?

GIVE HIM ANOTHER CHANCE!?

FINE, I SHALL DO AS YOU ADVISE. I WILL GIVE ZHANG HE ONCE MORE CHANCE.

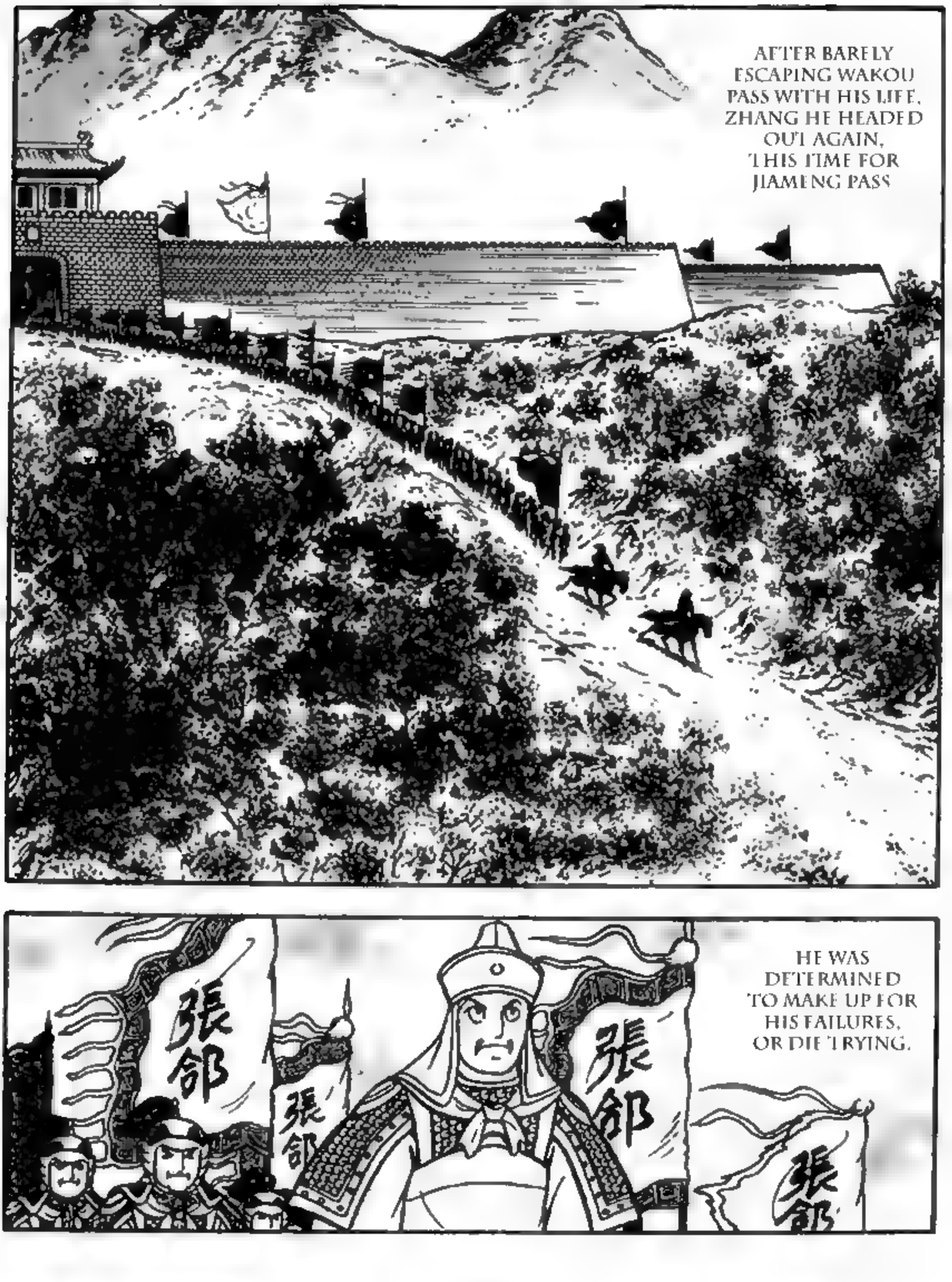
HM...

YES, THAT'S RIGHT. JIAMENG PASS IS A KEY PASS FOR SHU. HE CAN REDEEM HIMSELF IF HE CAPTURES IT AND IF NOT... THEN YOU HAVE ENOUGH REASON TO PUNISH HIM.

YES...

THIS IS YOUR FINAL CHANCE, ZHANG HE.

OLD-TIMERS


AFTER BARELY ESCAPING WAKOU PASS WITH HIS LIFE, ZHANG HE HEADED OUT AGAIN, THIS TIME FOR JIAMENG PASS
張郃
張郃
張郃
張郃
HE WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE UP FOR HIS FAILURES, OR DIE TRYING.

DEFENDING JIAMENG PASS WAS MENG DA AND HUO JUN.

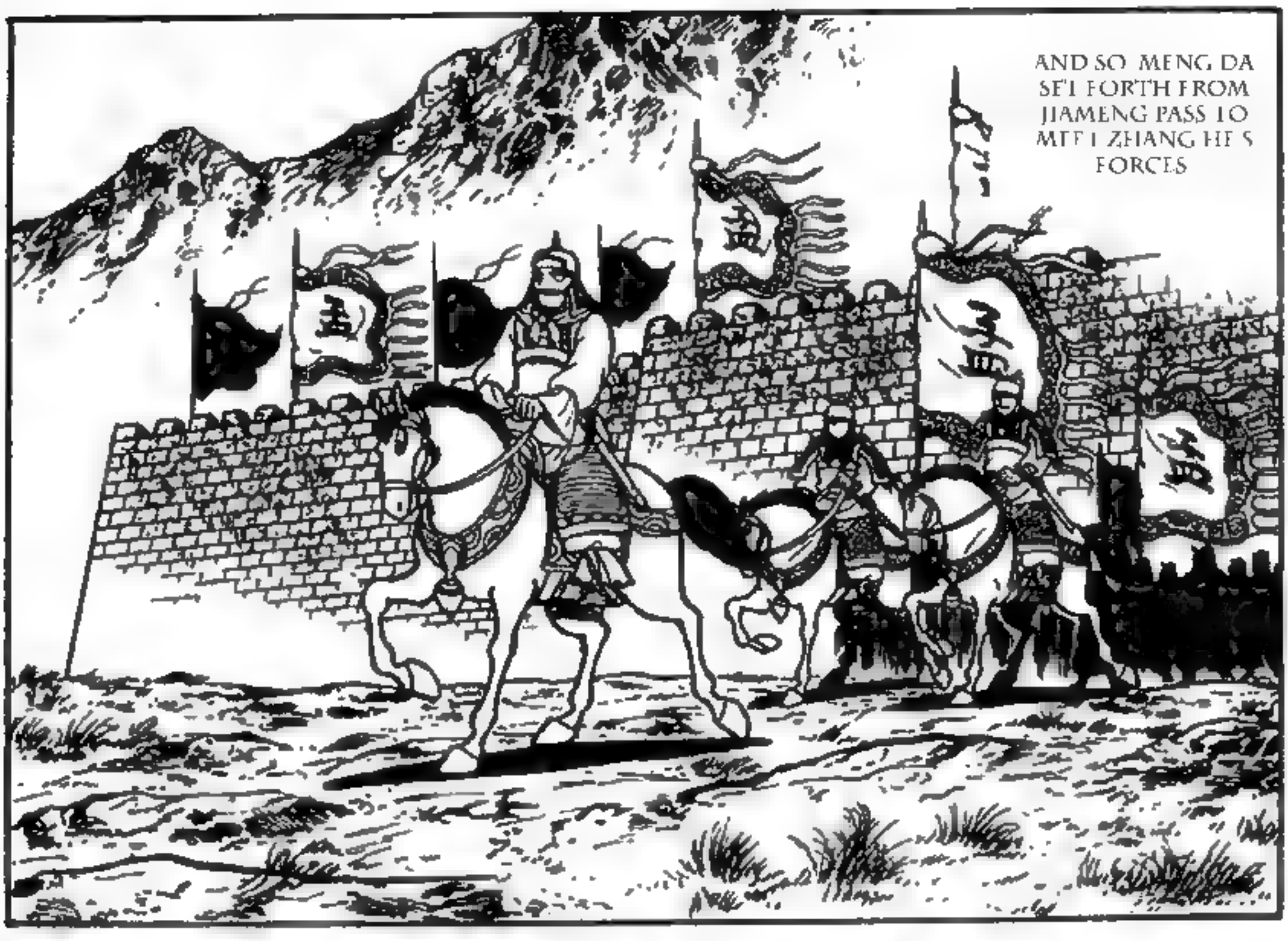
NO, WE SHOULD REMAIN BEHIND OUR WALLS AND STICK TO DEFENSE.

WE SHOULD GO OUT AND CHALLENGE THEM.

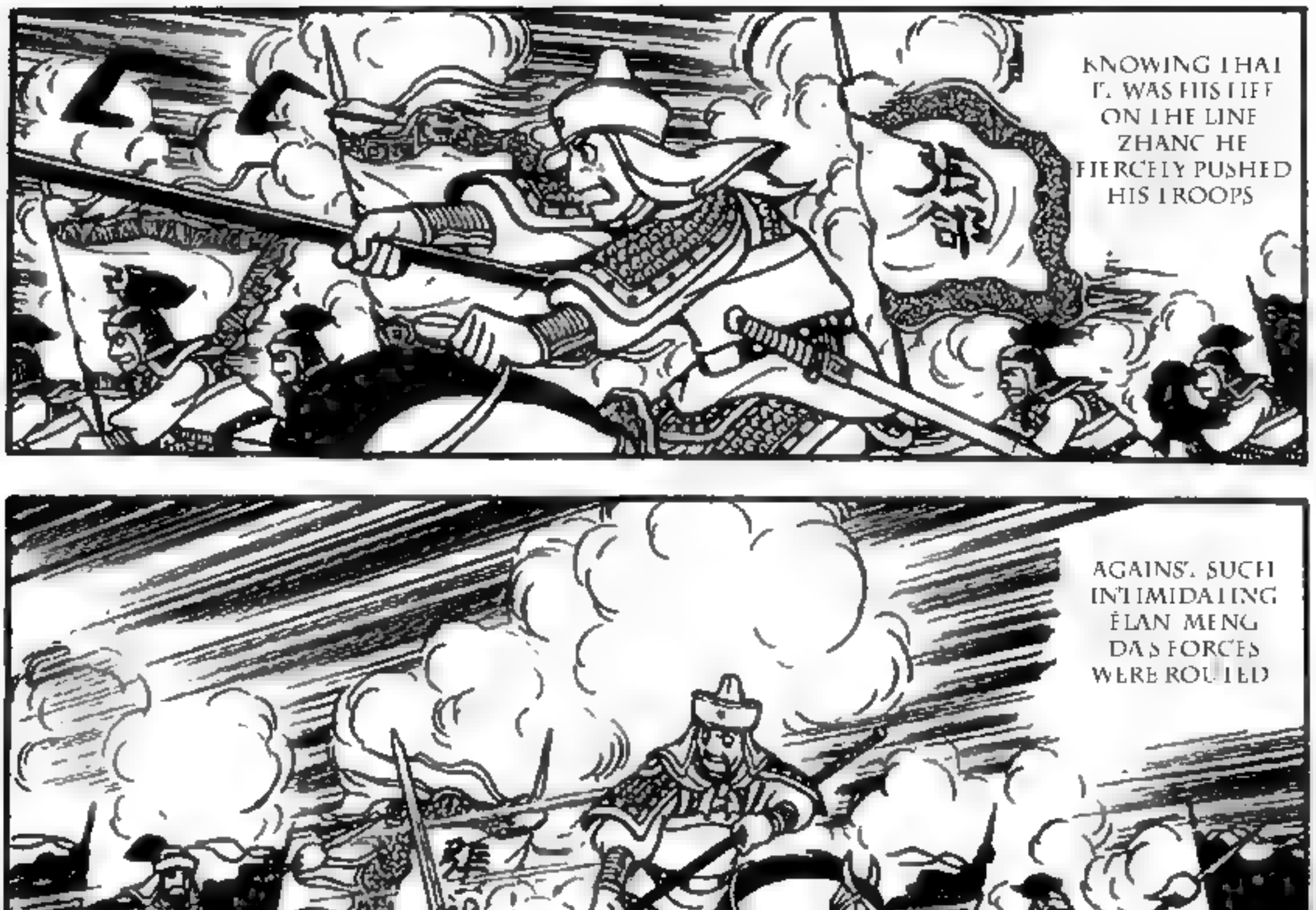
FINE, DO AS YOU WISH.

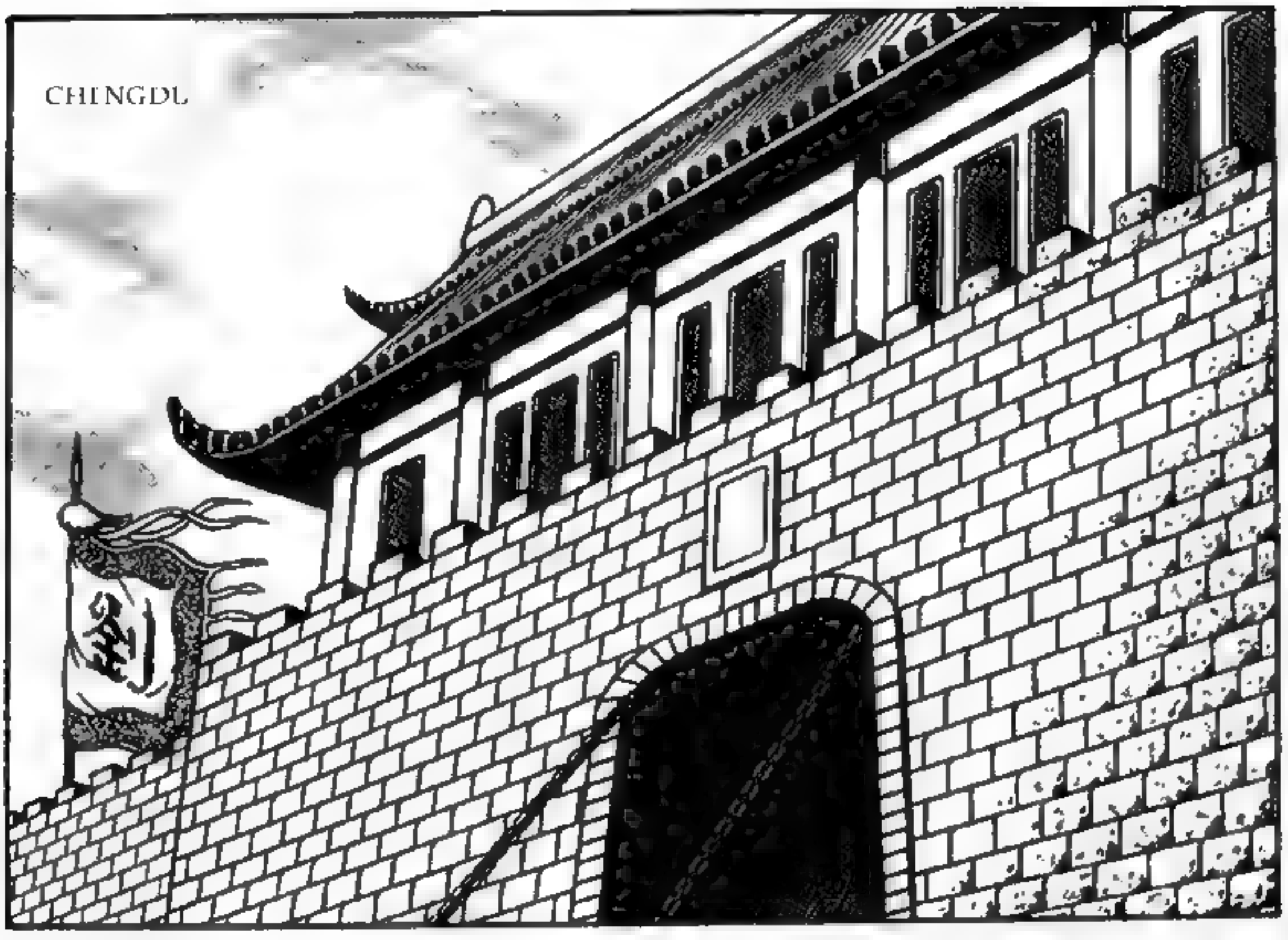
IF YOU FEEL SO STRONGLY ABOUT DEFENDING, YOU CAN STAY HERE WHILE I HEAD OUT.

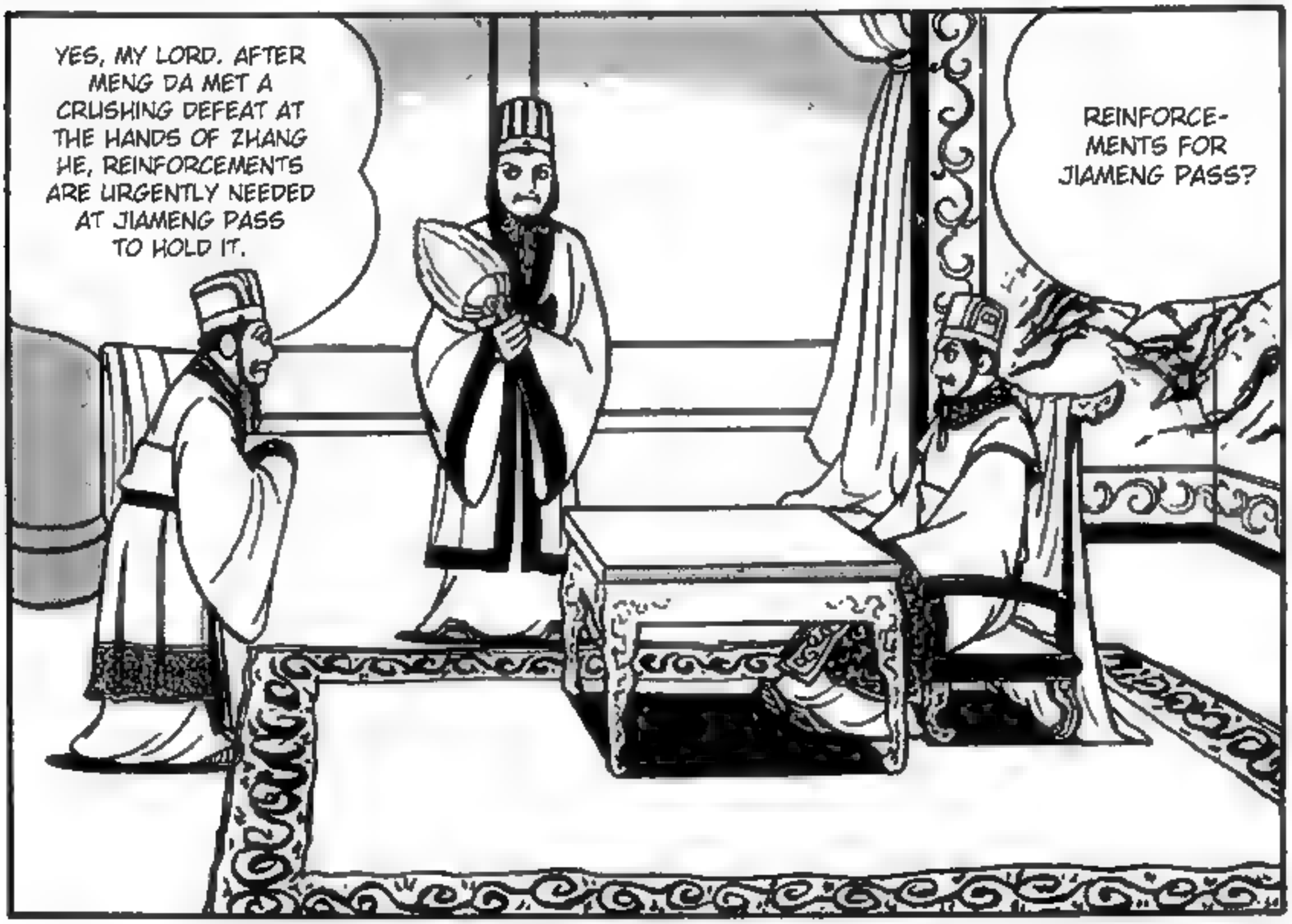
RESPONDING TO AN ENEMY MOVE IS INFERIOR TO FORCING HIM TO RESPOND TO YOUR OWN MOVE.


AND SO MENG DA SET FORTH FROM JIAMENG PASS TO MEET ZHANG HE'S FORCES

UNFORTUNATELY FOR MENG DA ZHANG HE WAS IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT STATE OF MIND


KNOWING THAT IT WAS HIS LIFE ON THE LINE ZHANG HE FIERCELY PUSHED HIS TROOPS
AGAINST SUCH INTIMIDATING ÉLAN MENG DA'S FORCES WERE ROUTED


CHENGDU


YES, MY LORD. AFTER MENG DA MET A CRUSHING DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF ZHANG HE, REINFORCEMENTS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED AT JIAMENG PASS TO HOLD IT.
REINFORCE-MENTS FOR JIAMENG PASS?

WE SHOULD HAVE ZHANG FEI MOVE TO JIAMENG PASS AT ONCE.

WHAT DO YOU THINK, KONGMING?

DESPITE ZHANG HE'S RECENT STRING OF DEFEATS, HE IS STILL ONE OF WEI'S TOP GENERALS. ONLY ZHANG FEI IS CAPABLE AND CLOSE ENOUGH FOR THIS TASK.

I ADVISE SENDING SOME OTHER GENERAL TO HELP DEFEND JIAMENG PASS.

HOLD ON. ZHANG FEI IS BUSY HOLDING WAKOU PASS AT THE MOMENT. RECALLING HIM SO SOON WOULD ONLY ENDANGER OUR RECENT GAINS.

NOW HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!

FROM THE WAY YOU SPEAK, ONE WOULD ALMOST GET THE IDEA THAT ZHANG FEI IS THE ONLY GENERAL OF NOTE AROUND HERE.

OH, HUANG ZHONG, I MEANT NO OFFENSE. BUT SURELY AN OLD SENIOR IS NO MATCH FOR A YOUTHFUL ZHANG HE.

I MAY OR MAY NOT BE AS CAPABLE AS ZHANG FEI, BUT JUST GIVE ME THE WORD AND I SHALL BRING YOU ZHANG HE'S HEAD.

THEN LET ME GIVE YOU A LITTLE DEMON-STRATION.

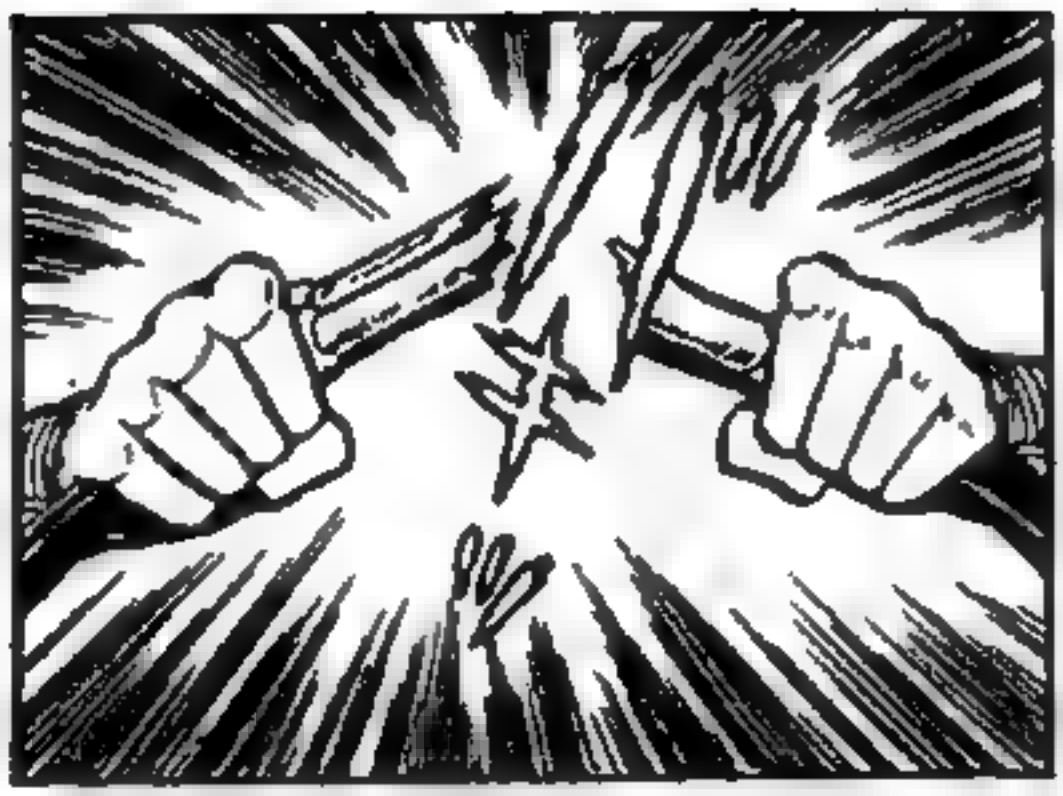
WHAT!? SO AN OLD-TIMER LIKE ME IS OF NO USE, EH!?

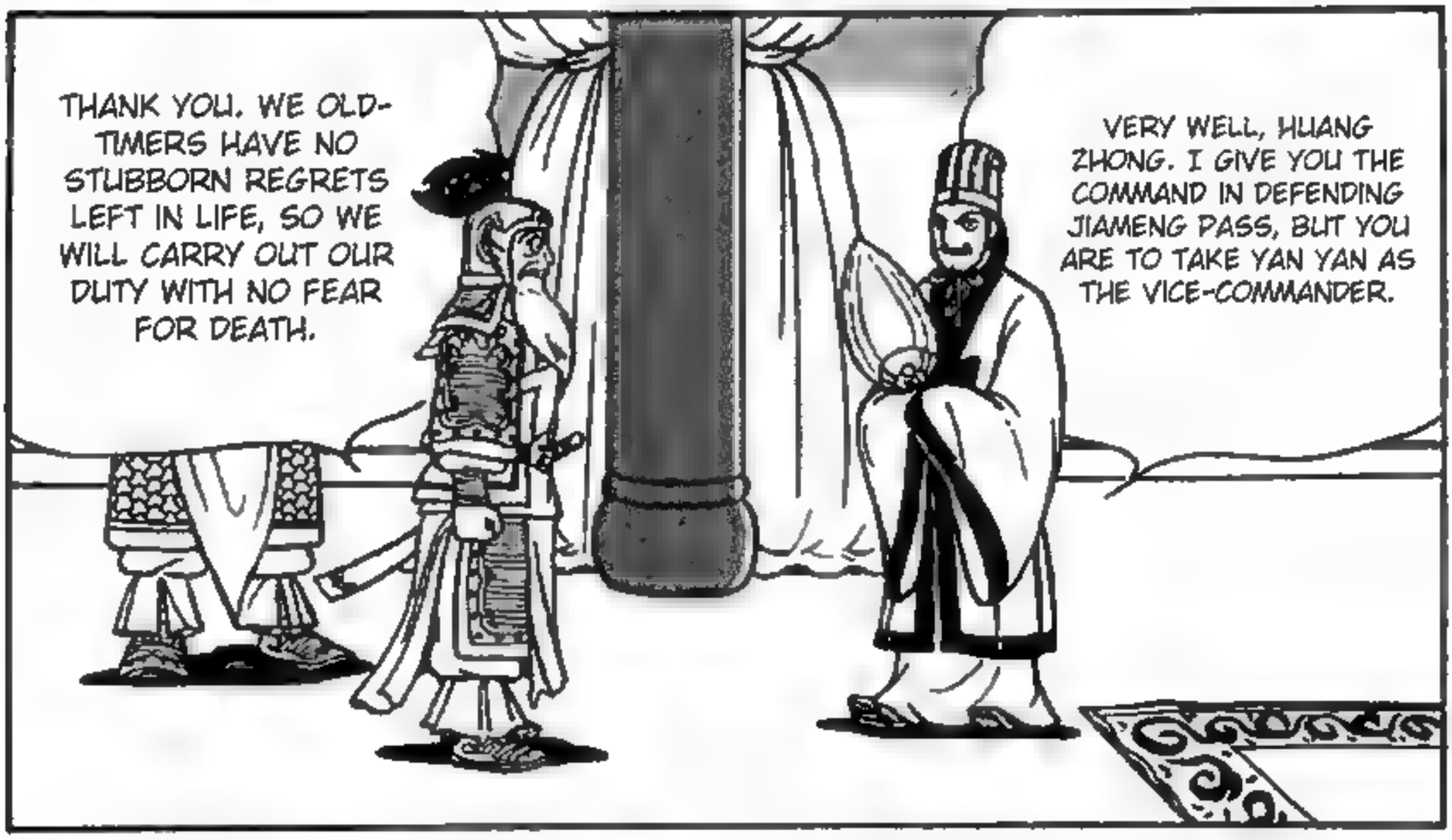
I CAN STILL SPIN A POLEARM LIKE A WAGON WHEEL,

ヒュン!

AND IF THIS ISN'T ENOUGH...

HOW'S THIS?



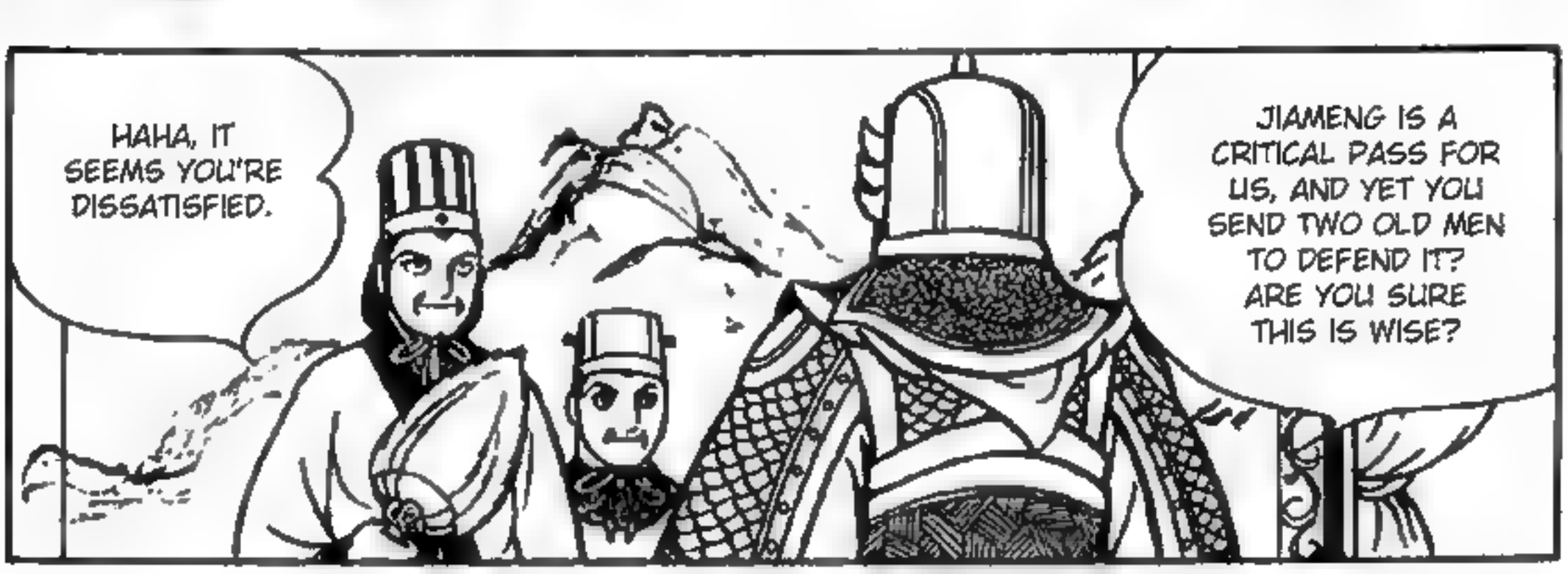

THANK YOU. WE OLD-TIMERS HAVE NO STUBBORN REGRETS LEFT IN LIFE, SO WE WILL CARRY OUT OUR DUTY WITH NO FEAR FOR DEATH.
VERY WELL, HUANG ZHONG. I GIVE YOU THE COMMAND IN DEFENDING JIAMENG PASS, BUT YOU ARE TO TAKE YAN YAN AS THE VICE-COMMANDER.

I SHALL NOT FAIL YOU, MY LORD.

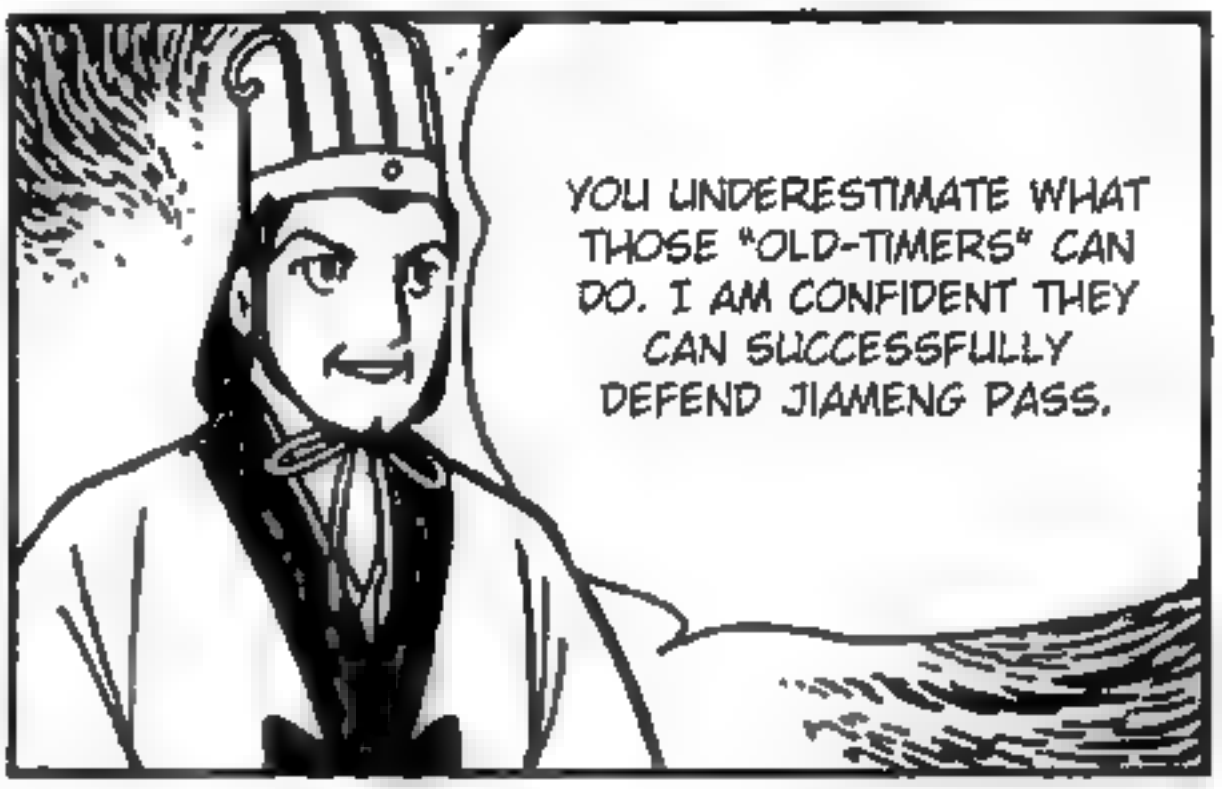
I WISH YOU THE BEST OF LUCK TO YOU TWO.

SIR!

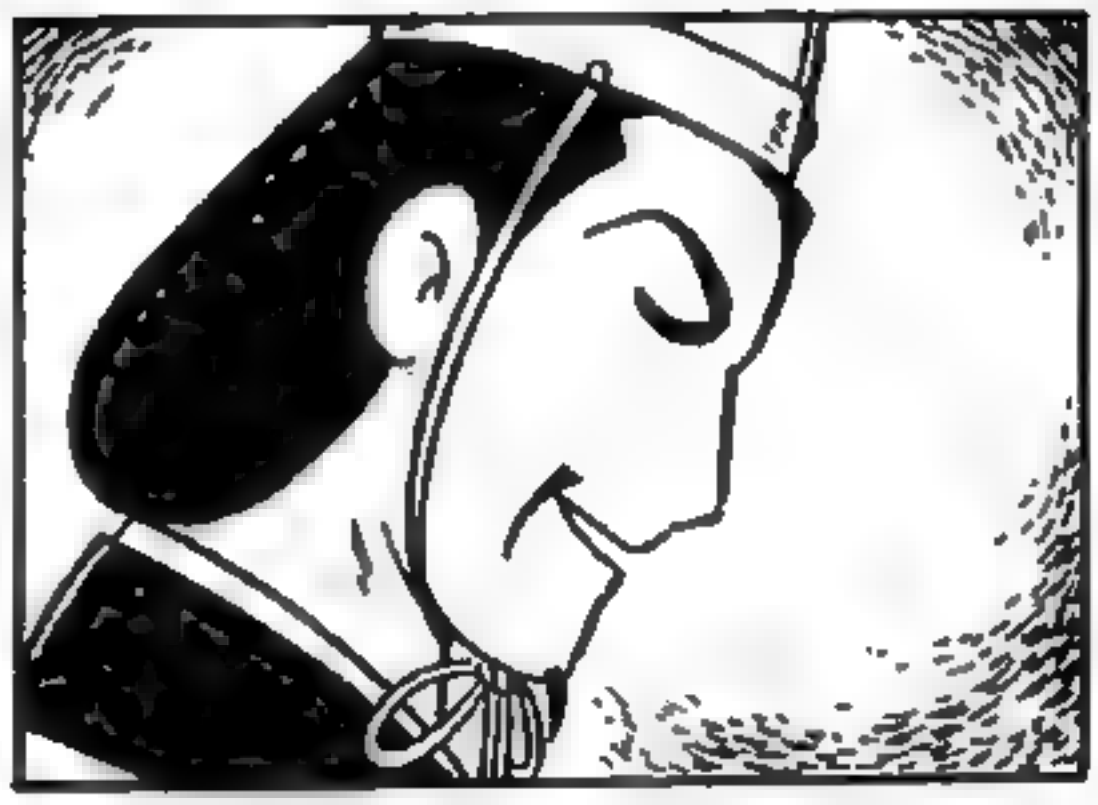
YES, LET'S.
SHALL WE DEPART, YAN YAN?


HAHA, IT SEEMS YOU'RE DISSATISFIED.
JIAMENG IS A CRITICAL PASS FOR US, AND YET YOU SEND TWO OLD MEN TO DEFEND IT? ARE YOU SURE THIS IS WISE?

BUT DIDN'T YOU YOURSELF DOUBT THEM JUST NOW?


YOU UNDERESTIMATE WHAT THOSE "OLD-TIMERS" CAN DO. I AM CONFIDENT THEY CAN SUCCESSFULLY DEFEND JIAMENG PASS.

THINK OF IT AS... PROPER MOTIVATION.



THE TWO OLD TIMERS HUANG ZHONG AND YAN YAN, SET OUT FOR JIAMENG PASS TO PROVE THEY STILL BELONGED ON THE BATTLEFIELD

JIAMING
PASS
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU YOUNGSTERS JUST SIT TIGHT AND WATCH WHILE WE TAKE CARE OF ZHANG HE.
WHAT? YOU'RE THE REINFORCE-MENTS?

GOOD.

FINE, WE SHALL LEAVE THE MATTER TO YOU.

YES.

LET US GO OBSERVE THE ENEMY CAMP FORMATION.

YES, I DON'T SEE HOW A PAIR OF GRANDPAS ARE GOING TO HELP US WIN THIS BATTLE...

DID KONGMING LOSE HIS MIND OR SOMETHING?

THEY CLEARLY THINK WE'RE OLD-FARTS WHO'VE OUTLIVED OUR USE.

YES, THEY LOOKED PUZZLED TO SAY THE LEAST.

DID YOU SEE THE LOOKS ON THEIR FACES JUST NOW?

JUST WHAT I WAS THINKING.

LET'S USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THESE YOUNG CALLOWS THEY'VE STILL GOT A LOT TO LEARN.

HMM...

WHISPER WHISPER

AND I'VE GOT JUST THE IDEA...

張郃
魏
魏
張郃

WHAT!?
...
SIR! ENEMIES HAVE COME OUT FROM JIAMENG PASS!

AHH!

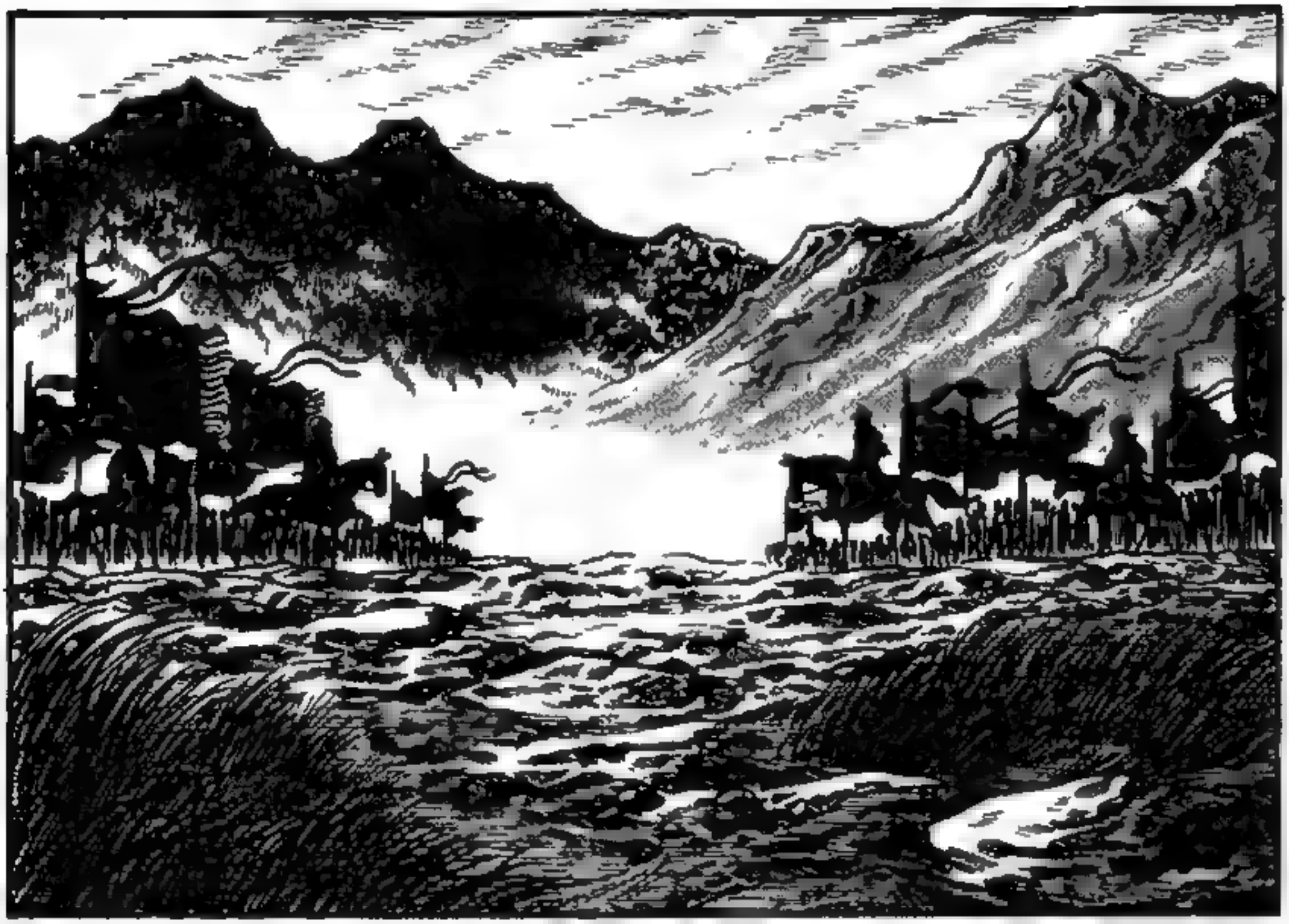
THAT FLAG IS...!

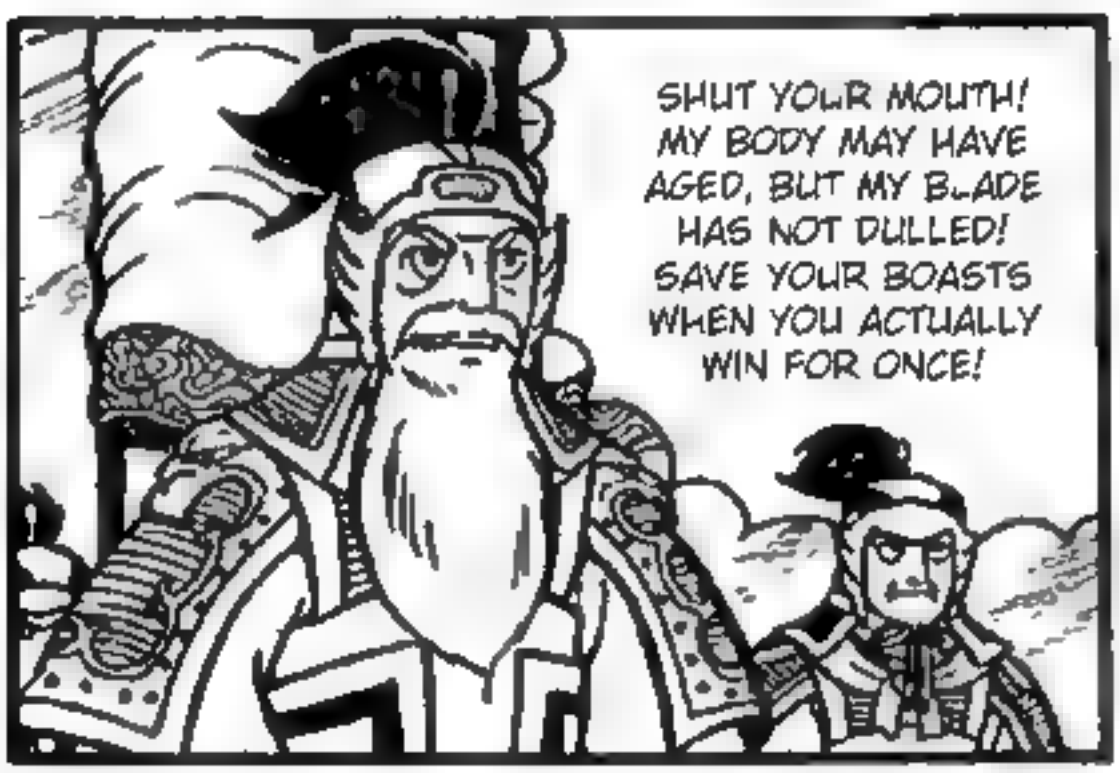
黃

LET'S MEET THEM HEAD-ON!

SHU'S RELYING ON ITS SENIORS TO FIGHT ITS BATTLES NOW?

THE ENEMY GENERAL MUST BE HUANG ZHONG! (黃忠)

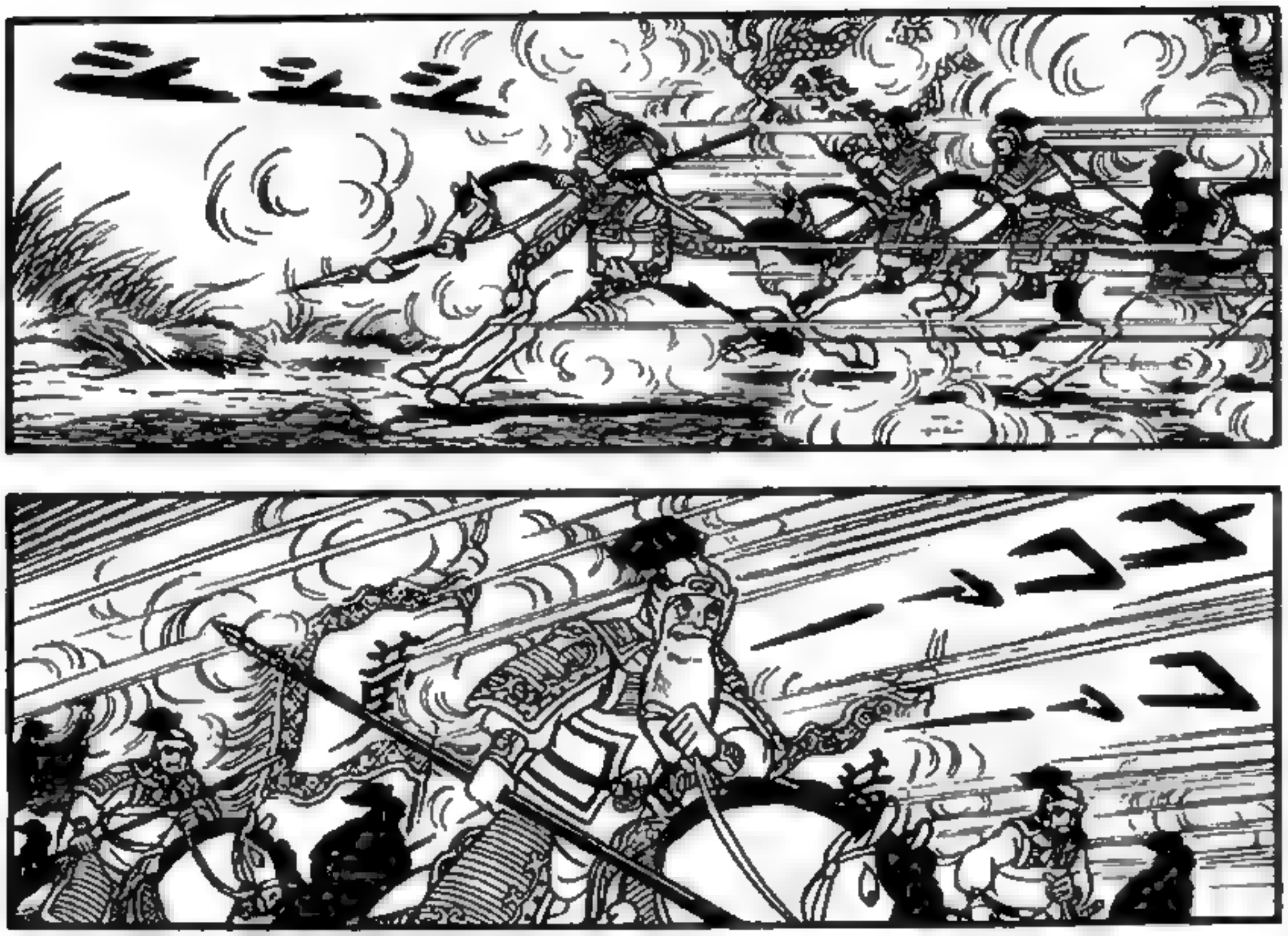


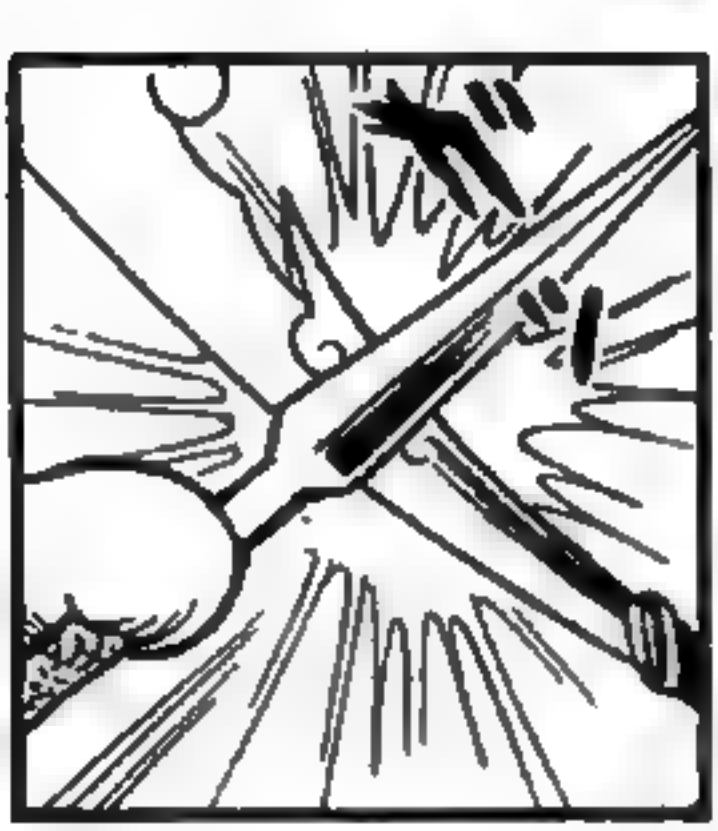

SHUT YOUR MOUTH! MY BODY MAY HAVE AGED, BUT MY BLADE HAS NOT DULLED! SAVE YOUR BOASTS WHEN YOU ACTUALLY WIN FOR ONCE!

ARE YOU SURE YOU OUGHT TO BE FIGHTING ON A BATTLEFIELD AT YOUR FRAIL OLD AGE?

ATTACK!

ATTACK!





NO NEED TO RUSH TO YOUR DEATH WHEN YOU'RE ALREADY AT DEATH'S DOOR!
COME AT ME!

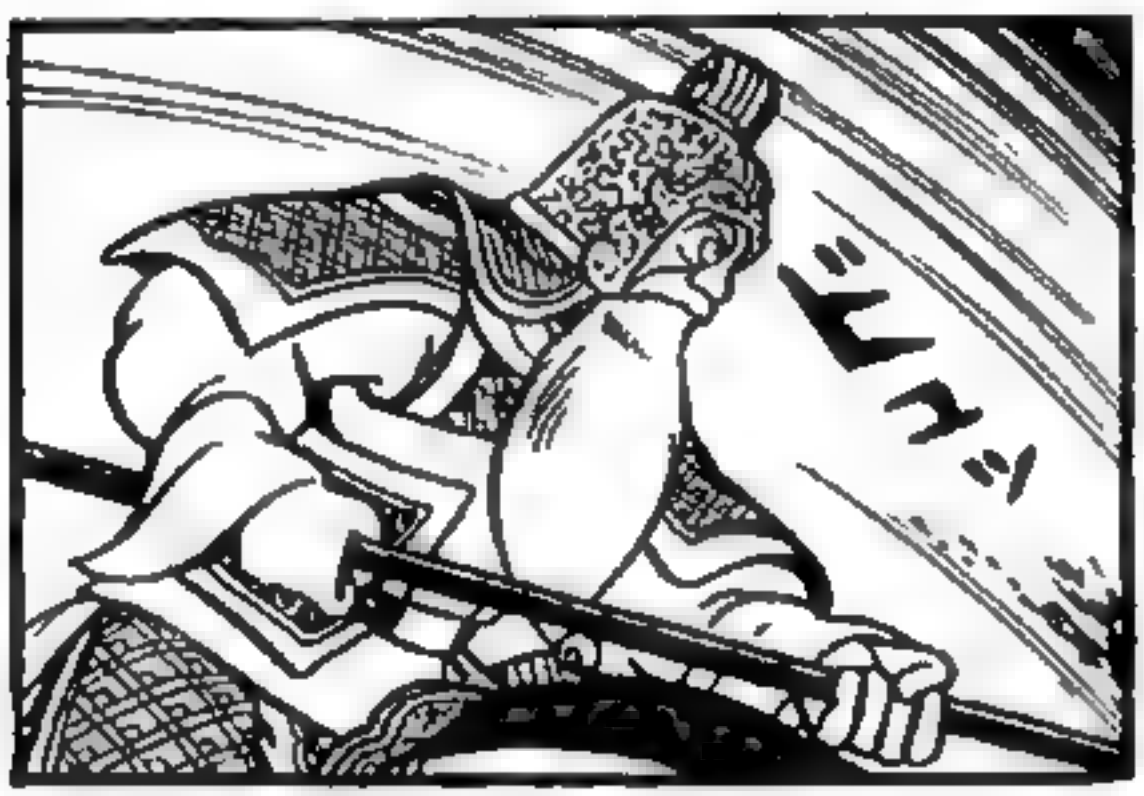
アアアア

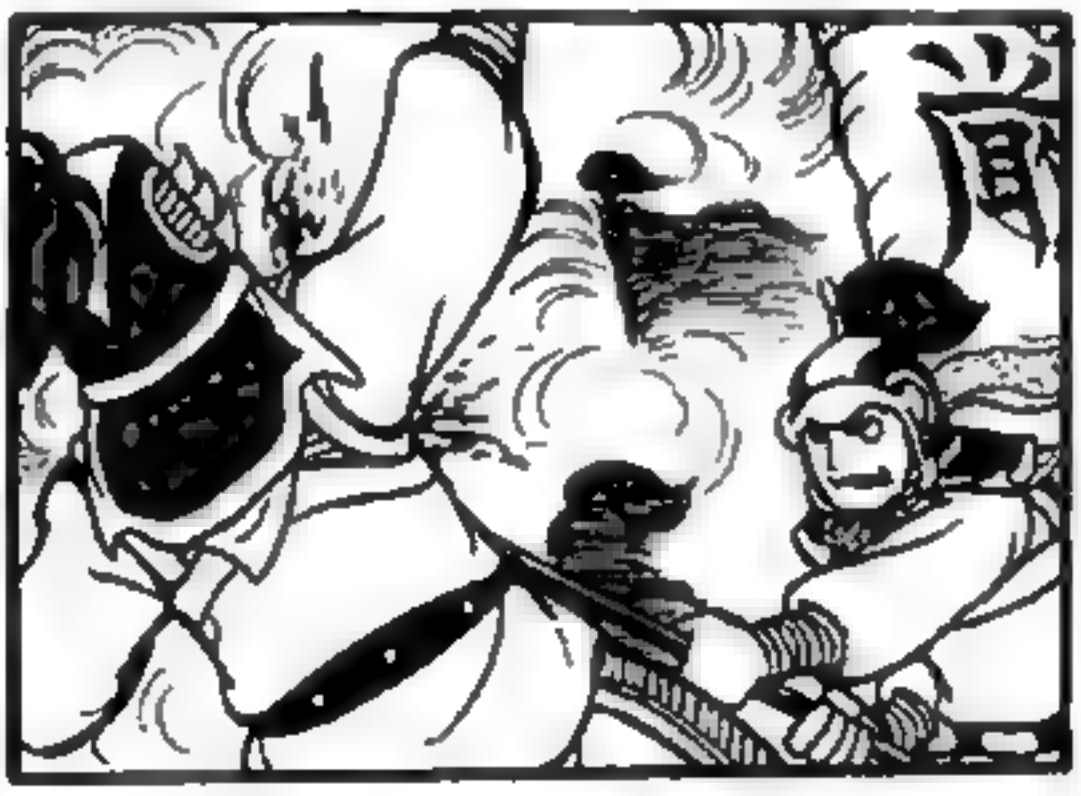
AH!

WHAT!?

ENEMY FORCES HAVE APPEARED TO OUR REAR, SIR!
WHAT'S THAT?

KILL EVERY LAST MAN!





NGHH...

SIR! OUR FORCES ARE IN DISARRAY!

RETREAT!

SIR, WE MUST RETREAT SO WE CAN REORGANIZE OUR LINES!

HUFF...
HUFF...

ZHANG HE WAS FORCED TO RETREAT 90LI AND SET UP ANOTHER CAMP

I KNEW HE COULDN'T DO IT! CALL HIM BACK IMMEDIATELY!
WHAT? ZHANG HE WAS DEFEATED!?
THAT WOULD BE AN IRREVERSIBLE MISTAKE.
IF YOU TRY TO CALL HIM BACK NOW, ONLY TO EXECUTE HIM, IT'S POSSIBLE HE MAY DEFECT TO SHU.
AGAIN!?
PLEASE WAIT, COMMANDER!

HMM... I SUPPOSE YOU DO HAVE A POINT...

INSTEAD OF RECALLING HIM, WE SHOULD SEND HIM ADDITIONAL HELP TO TAKE JIAMENG PASS.

SIR!

YES, SIR.

XIAHOU SHANG! TAKE 5000 TROOPS AND ASSIST ZHANG HE RIGHT AWAY!

WHAT IS IT, HAN HAO?

BACK WHEN MY BROTHER HAN XUAN WAS THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA, IT WAS HUANG ZHONG AND WEI YAN'S BETRAYAL THAT LED TO MY BROTHER'S DEATH. PLEASE GIVE ME A CHANCE TO AVENGE HIS DEATH.

HUANG ZHONG'S HORSE TRIPPED,

AH, YES. THAT TIME WHEN GUAN YU BESEIGED CHANGSHA...

HAD HE WANTED, GUAN YU COULD HAVE CUT HIM DOWN THEN AND THERE.

AND HE FELL OFF HIS HORSE

BUT HE WITHDREW FOR THE DAY AND TOLD HIM TO GET ANOTHER HORSE

DURING THE DUEL THE DAY AFTER

HUANG ZHONG FIRST TWANGED HIS BOW WITH NO ARROW,

TO REPAY HIS DEBT,

BUT AIMED RIGHT FOR GUAN YU'S HEADPIECE

THEN SHOT AN ARROW FOR REAL.

BY DOING SO HUANG ZHONG DEFIED HAN XUAN'S ORDERS TO KILL GUAN YU FROM AFAR WITH HIS BOW AND ARROW

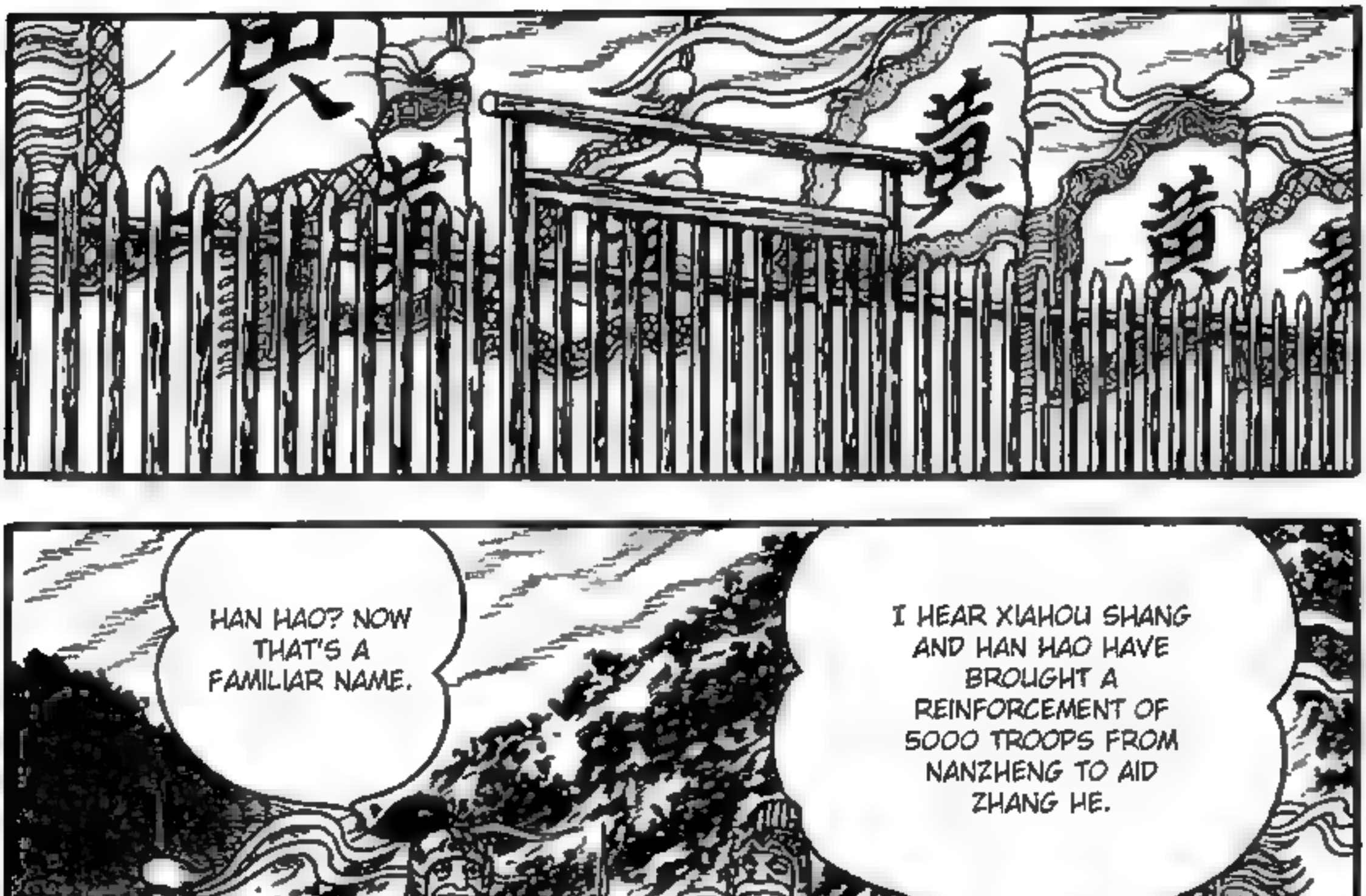
CONVINCED THAT HUANG ZHONG WAS SECRETLY IN CAHOOTS WITH GUAN YU, HAN XUAN HAD HIM ARRESTED

RIGHT, IT'S ONLY NATURAL YOU'D WANT TO AVENGE YOUR BROTHER'S DEATH...

HAN HAO LIKE HIS BROTHER HAN XUAN WAS CONVINCED HUANG ZHONG'S COMPASSION TOWARDS GUAN YU ON THAT DAY WAS A CLEAR SIGN OF BETRAYAL

THANK YOU.

FINE. XIAHOU SHANG AND HAN HAO WILL BOTH GO ASSIST ZHANG HE.


HAN HAO? NOW THAT'S A FAMILIAR NAME.
I HEAR XIAHOU SHANG AND HAN HAO HAVE BROUGHT A REINFORCEMENT OF 5000 TROOPS FROM NANZHENG TO AID ZHANG HE.

THEN I'VE GOT JUST THE PLAN...

HE'LL LIKELY BE ONLY TOO EAGER TO AVENGE HIS BROTHER'S DEATH BY TAKING MY HEAD...

IS THAT TRUE!?

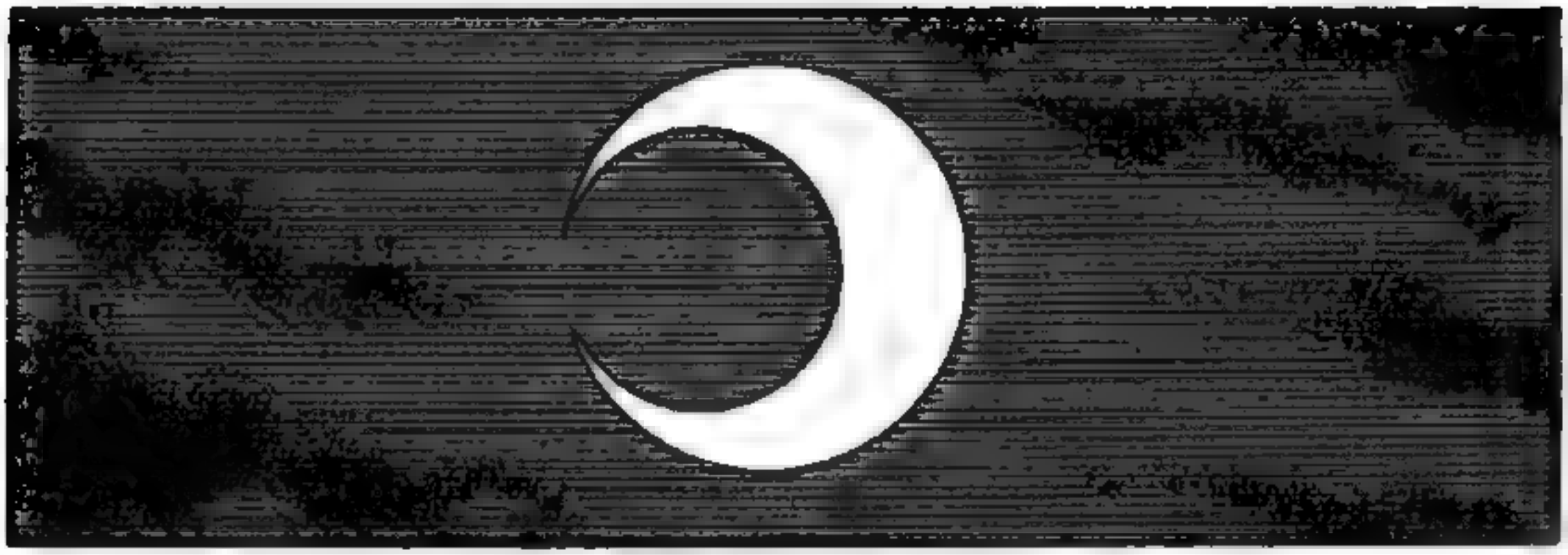
OVER IN THAT DIRECTION IS THE TIANDANG MOUNTAIN, WHERE I HEAR THE ENEMY SUPPLIES ARE STORED. IF WE CAN CAPTURE IT, THE ENEMIES WILL SOON HAVE NO FOOD.

FORGET ZHANG HE, IT'LL BE A CRITICAL BLOW TO ALL OF HANZHONG.

IT'LL BE A CRITICAL BLOW TO ZHANG HE IF WE CAPTURE IT INDEED.

OH? DOES THAT IMPLY YOU HAVE A GOOD IDEA AS WELL?

HAHAHA! IT SEEMS OLD AGE HAS YET TO DULL EITHER OF OUR WITS.



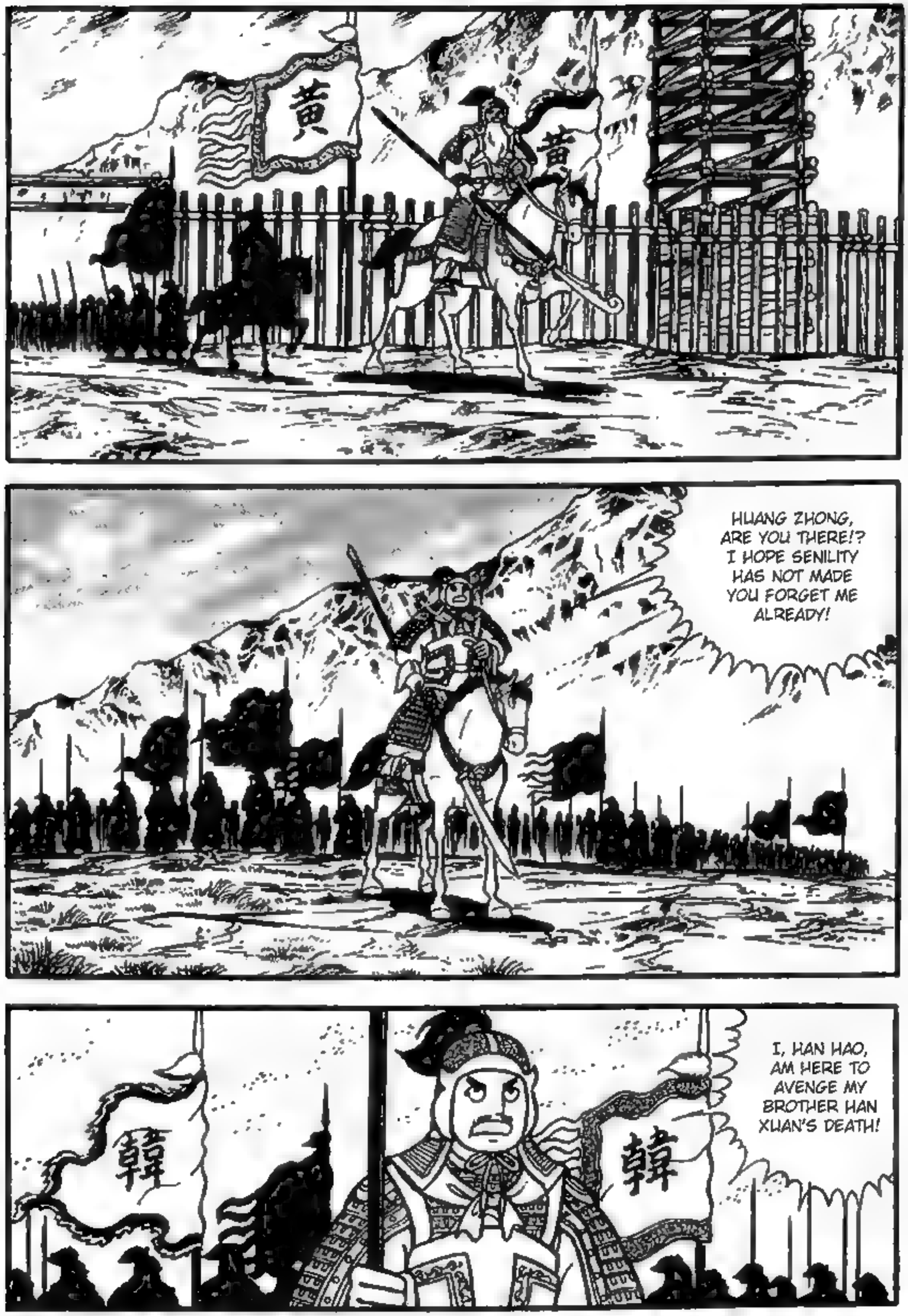
YES, MAY WE BOTH SUCCESS-FULLY CARRY OUT OUR PARTS.
厥
I'LL LEAVE IT UP TO YOU, YAN YAN.

THAT NIGHT, YAN YAN'S FORCES HEADED OFF SOMEWHERE INTO THE DISTANCE

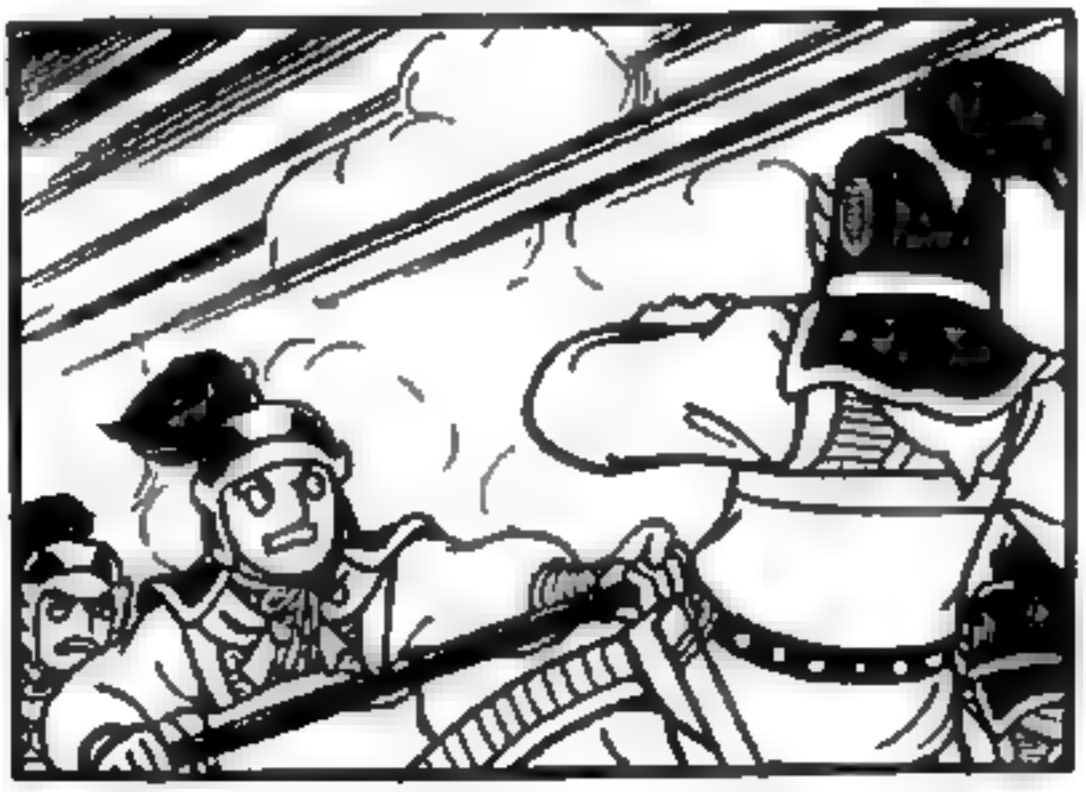
AH, SO THEY'RE HERE?

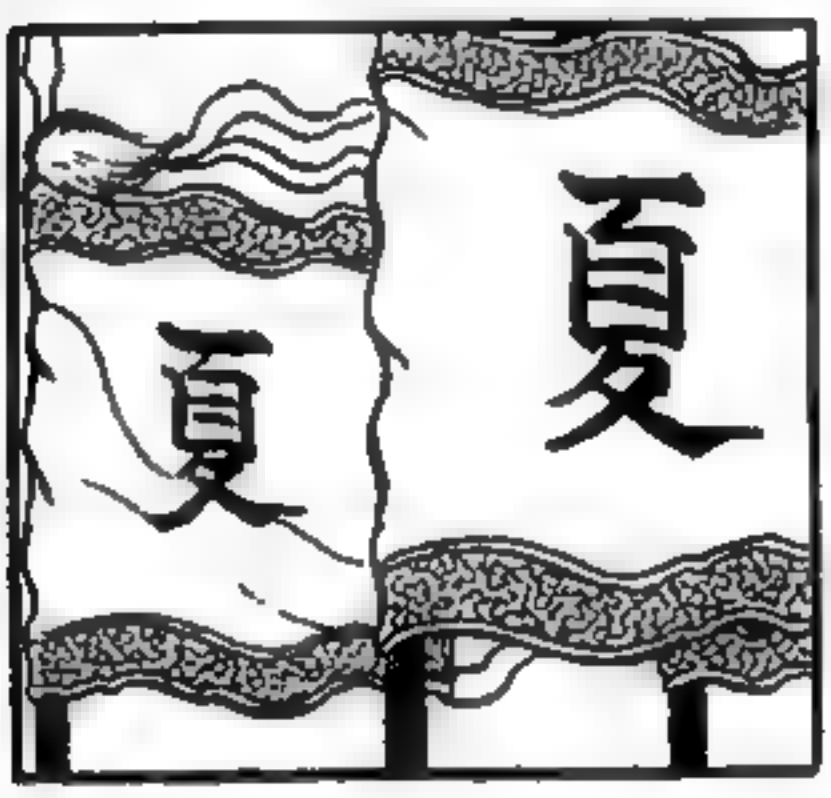
ENEMIES SPOTTED, SIR!

LET'S GO GREET THEM THEN.

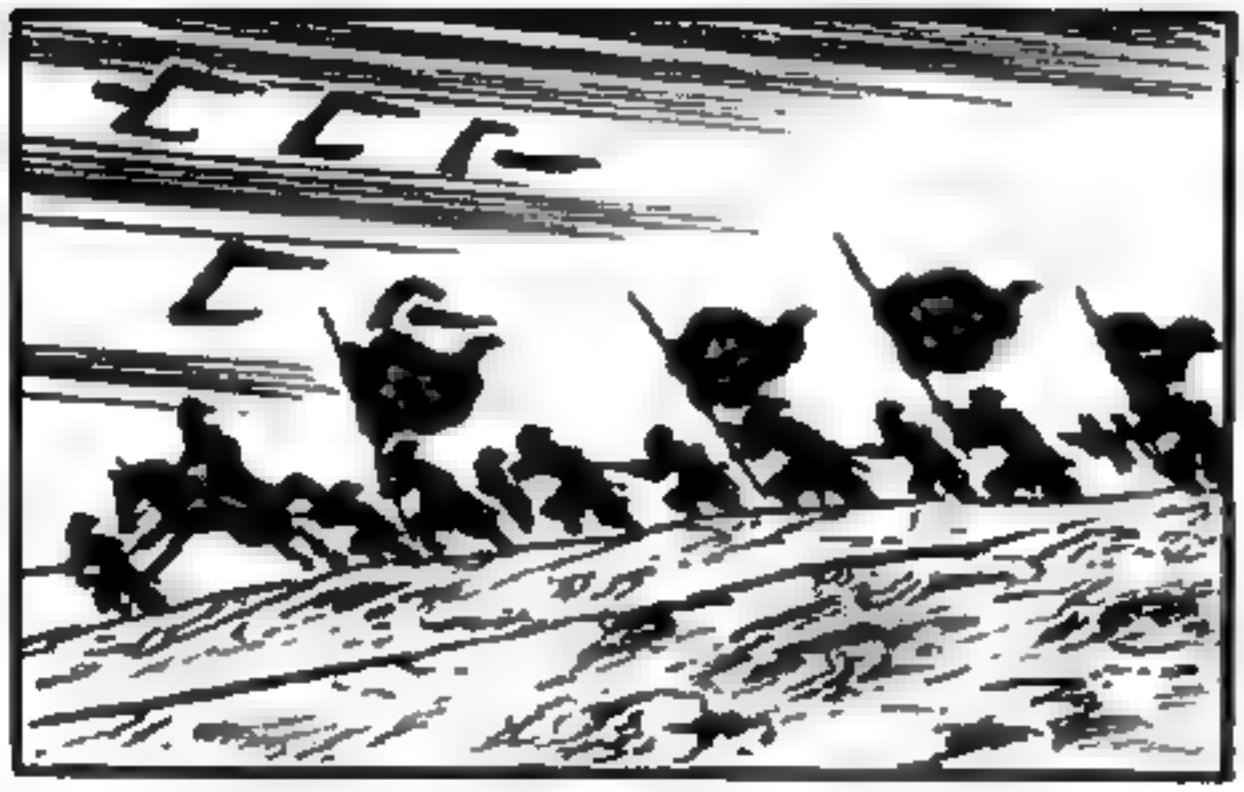

黃
黃
HUANG ZHONG, ARE YOU THERE!? I HOPE SENILITY HAS NOT MADE YOU FORGET ME ALREADY!
韓
韓
I, HAN HAO, AM HERE TO AVENGE MY BROTHER HAN XUAN'S DEATH!

*HAN (韓) HAO
HUANG (黃) ZHONG





*XIAHOU (夏) SHANG



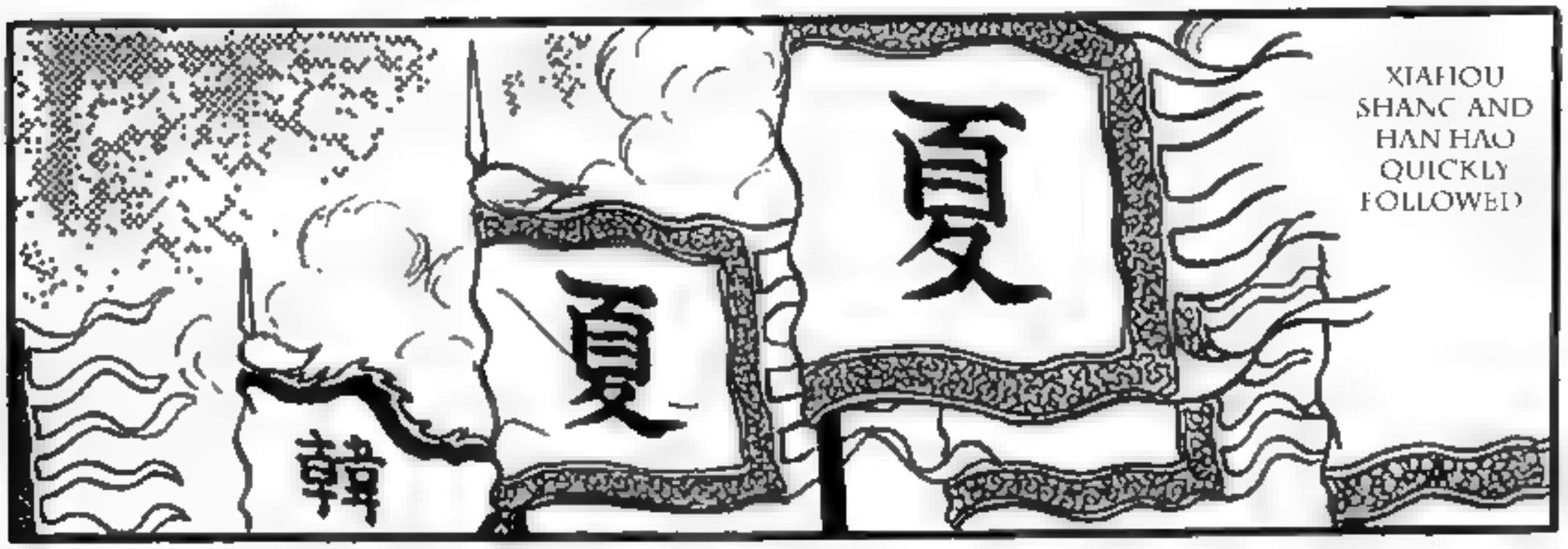
NOW! HIT THEM FROM THE REAR!

RETREAT!

IS THAT SO?

SIR! XIAHOU SHANG'S FORCES HAVE APPEARED BEHIND US!

HUANG ZHONG'S FORCES RETREATED 20 LI AND SET UP CAMP


XIAHOU SHANG AND HAN HAO QUICKLY FOLLOWED
夏
夏
夏
韓

THE NEXT DAY, XIAHOU SHANG AND HAN HAO PRESSED ON THE ATTACK AGAIN

黃
HUANG ZHONG MET THEM HEAD-ON AGAIN

黃
夏

ONLY TO LOSE THE ENGAGE MENT AND RETREAT ANOTHER 20 LI

HAHAHA! THAT OLD FART'S NO MATCH FOR US!

YES, SIR.

夏

CALL ZHANG HE. I WANT HIM TO HOLD ONTO THIS CAMP WE CAPTURED.

HAHAHA! SURE, OF COURSE, OF COURSE!

NO! HIS HEAD IS MINE AND MINE ALONE!

TOMORROW'S THE DAY I TAKE HUANG ZHONG'S GRAY-HAIRED HEAD!

YES, I WANT YOU TO HOLD ONTO THIS CAMP WE JUST CAPTURED WHILE HAN HAO AND I ADVANCE.

YOU CALLED?

OF COURSE. ONE MUST PRESS FORWARD WHEN THE ENEMY IS DISORGANIZED AND ON THE RETREAT.

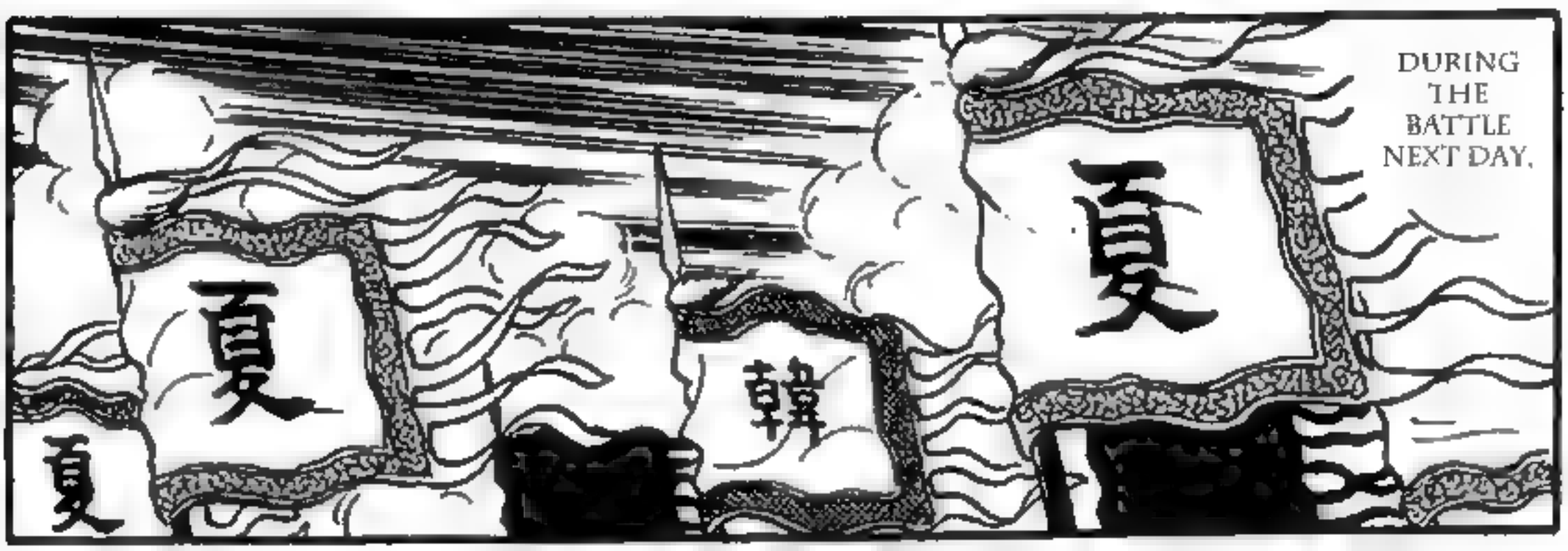
YOU'RE ADVANCING AGAIN ALREADY?

QUIET! YOUR COWARDICE IS EXACTLY WHY YOU'VE BEEN LOSING OVER AND OVER AGAIN!

I MUST SAY I'M BAFFLED WHY A GENERAL OF HUANG ZHONG'S CALIBRE WOULD PUT UP A MEEK FIGHT AND WITHDRAW FOR TWO DAYS STRAIGHT. THIS MUST BE SOME SORT OF TRAP...

.....

THAT'S RIGHT! YOU JUST STAY QUIET AND SEE HOW REAL GENERALS FIGHT BATTLES!


DURING THE BATTLE NEXT DAY,
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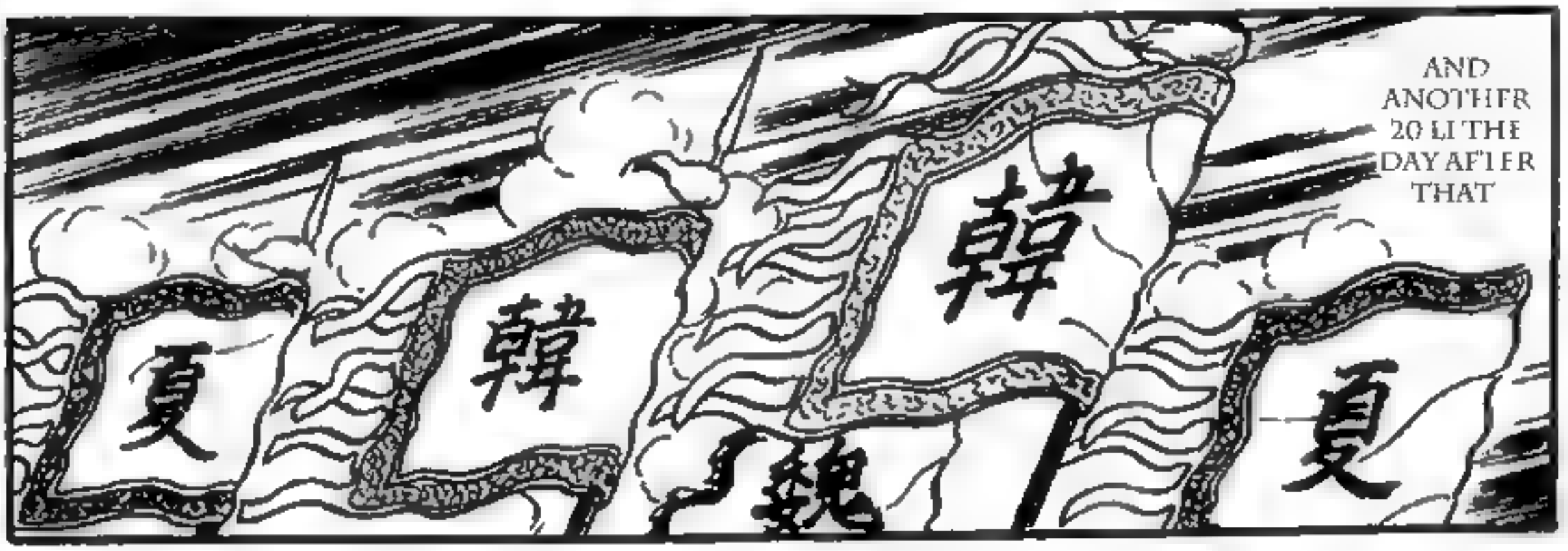
HUANG ZHONG RETREATED ANOTHER 20 LI ONCE AGAIN


AND ANOTHER 20 LI THE DAY AFTER THAT
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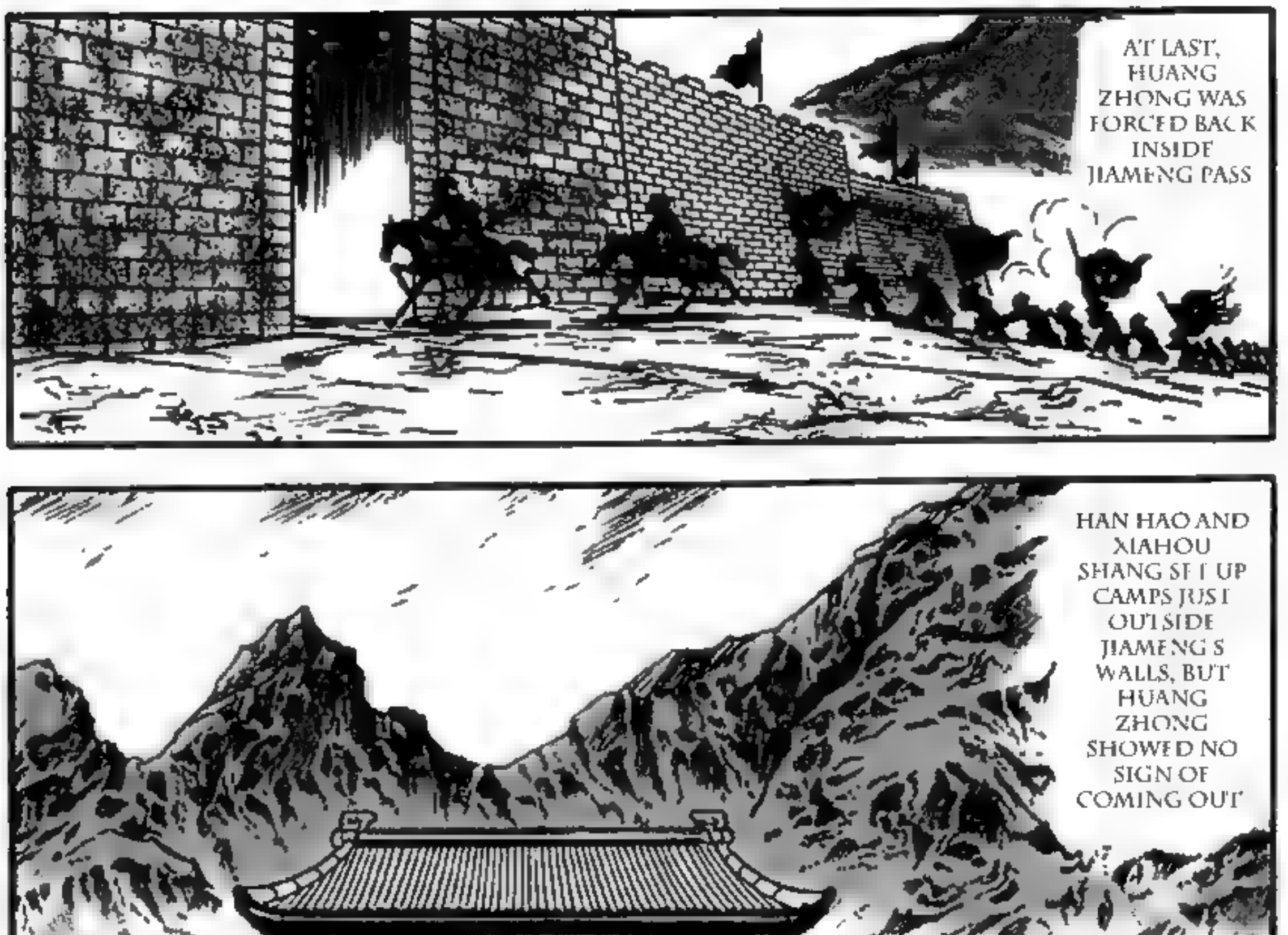
AT LAST, HUANG ZHONG WAS FORCED BACK INSIDE JIAMENG PASS
HAN HAO AND XIAHOU SHANG SET UP CAMPS JUST OUTSIDE JIAMENG'S WALLS, BUT HUANG ZHONG SHOWED NO SIGN OF COMING OUT
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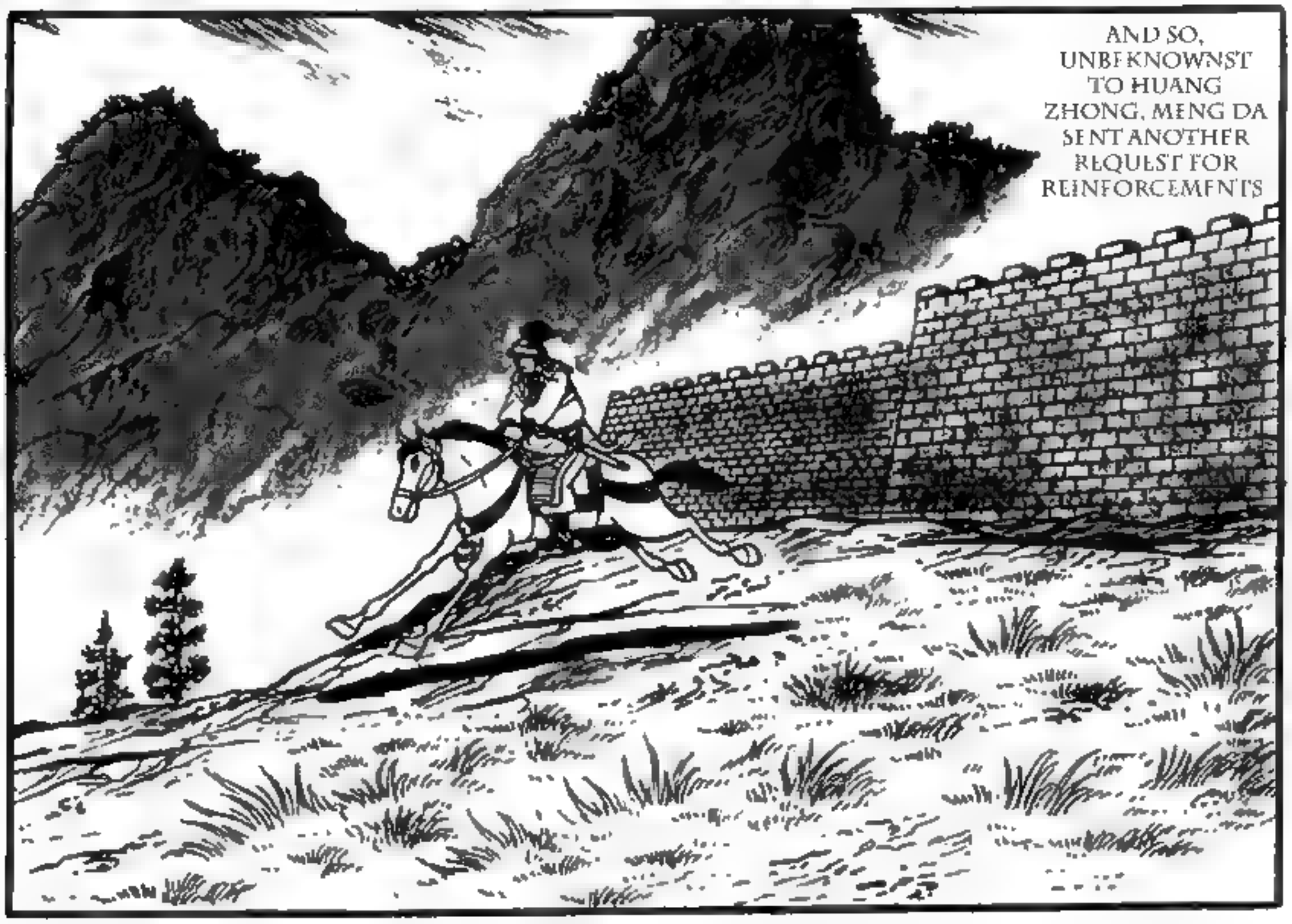
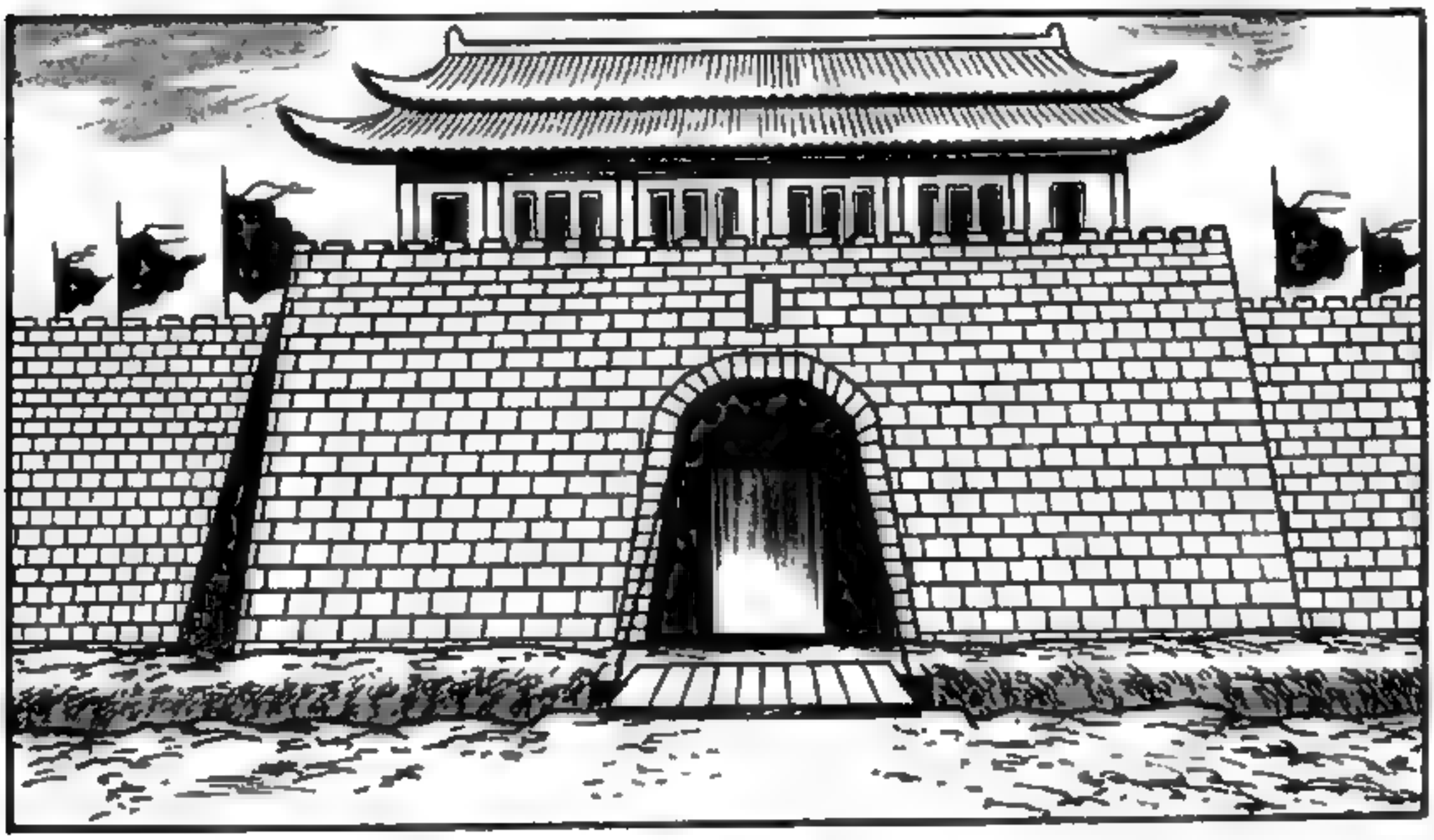
HUO JUN, THE ENEMIES ARE NOW AT OUR GATES...

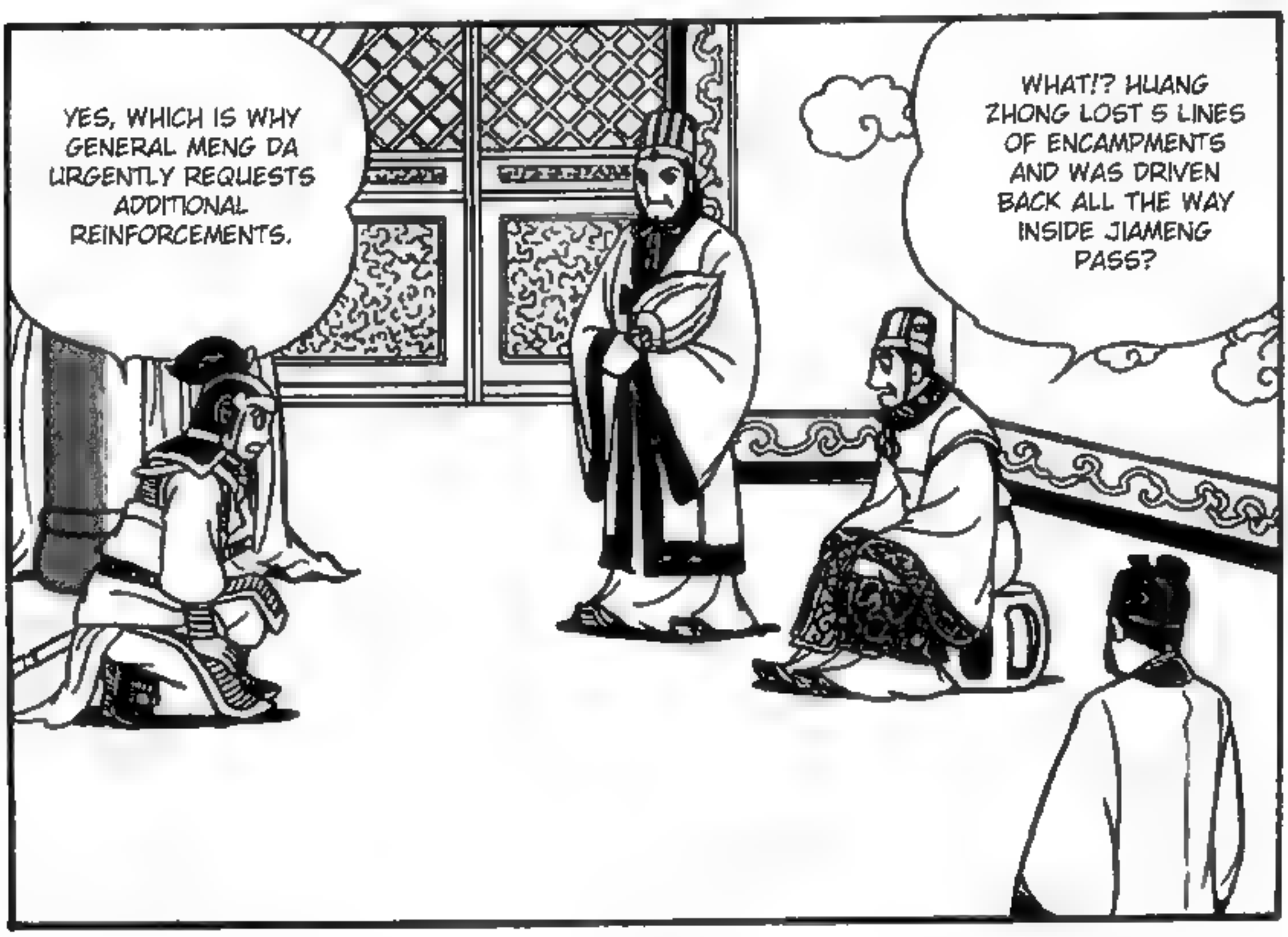
YES...
WE BETTER ASK FOR REINFORCEMENTS FROM CHENGDU AGAIN BEFORE JIAMENG PASS IS CAPTURED.

IT WAS KONGMING'S MISTAKE IN SENDING AN OLD MAN LIKE HIM FOR THIS TASK.
HUANG ZHONG'S ALREADY LOST 5 LINES OF ENCAMP-MENTS...


AND SO, UNBEKNOWNST TO HUANG ZHONG, MENG DA SENT ANOTHER REQUEST FOR REINFORCEMENTS

EXPLOITING HUBRIS




YES, WHICH IS WHY GENERAL MENG DA URGENTLY REQUESTS ADDITIONAL REINFORCEMENTS.
WHAT!? HUANG ZHONG LOST 5 LINES OF ENCAMPMENTS AND WAS DRIVEN BACK ALL THE WAY INSIDE JIAMENG PASS?

I DO NOT KNOW, BUT HE IS NOT AT JIAMENG PASS.

AND WHERE IS YAN YAN, PRESENTLY?

I FEAR YOUR TRUST IN HUANG ZHONG'S ABILITIES MAY HAVE BEEN MISPLACED, KONGMING.

?

THERE IS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, MY LORD.

HAHAHA! IS THAT SO?

JUST THE FACT THAT YAN YAN HAS MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED IS PROOF THAT THEY'RE UP TO SOMETHING.

HE IS?

HUANG ZHONG IS SIMPLY FEEDING THE HUBRIS OF HIS ENEMIES, SO THAT HE CAN EXPLOIT IT.

WELL, IF YOU ARE THAT CONCERNED, I SUPPOSE IT WOULDN'T HURT TO BE CAUTIOUS BY SENDING SOME REINFORCE-MENTS.

BUT YAN YAN, TOO, IS AN OLD MAN. WHAT IF OLD AGE HAS FORCED HIM OFF FROM THE FIELD?

YES, FATHER.

LIU FENG, YOU ARE TO LEAD YOUR TROOPS TO REINFORCE JIAMENG PASS.

LIU FENG QUICKLY HEADED FOR JIAMENG PASS WITH ONE DIVISION

OUR LORD WAS CONCERNED OVER THE RECENT REVERSAL AND HAS SENT ME TO AID IN THE DEFENSE OF JIAMENG PASS.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, LIU FENG?

AH, SO OUR STRATEGIST HAS REALIZED MY INTENTIONS, HAS HE?

YES, THAT'S WHAT KONGMING REMARKED AS WELL.

HAHA, THERE'S NO NEED FOR WORRY. I'M MERELY FEEDING THE ENEMIES' HUBRIS TO EXPLOIT IT.

IN REALITY, I DID NOT "LOSE" THOSE 5 CAMPS. I'VE MERELY RENTED THEM OUT TO THE ENEMIES TEMPORARILY SO THAT THEY'LL FILL IT WITH THEIR OWN GRAIN AND SUPPLIES.

TONI-GHT!?

THOSE CAMPS SHOULD BE FULLY STOCKED BY NOW, SO I THINK TONIGHT WILL BE THE RIGHT TIME TO STRIKE.

.....

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SINCE YOU'VE COME ALL THE WAY HERE, FEEL FREE TO TAKE A SEAT AND ENJOY THE SIGHT! HAHAHA!

THAT NIGHT
HUANG ZHONG SILENTLY LED 5000 TROOPS OUT FROM JIAMENG PASS
劉
蜀
HE HAD REFRAINED FROM ATTACKING UNTIL NOW TO LULL THE ENEMIES INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY

DRUNK FROM THEIR RECENT STRING OF VICTORIES, THE ENEMIES WERE CAUGHT COMPLETELY OFF GUARD BY THE NIGHT RAID

AND HAN HAO,

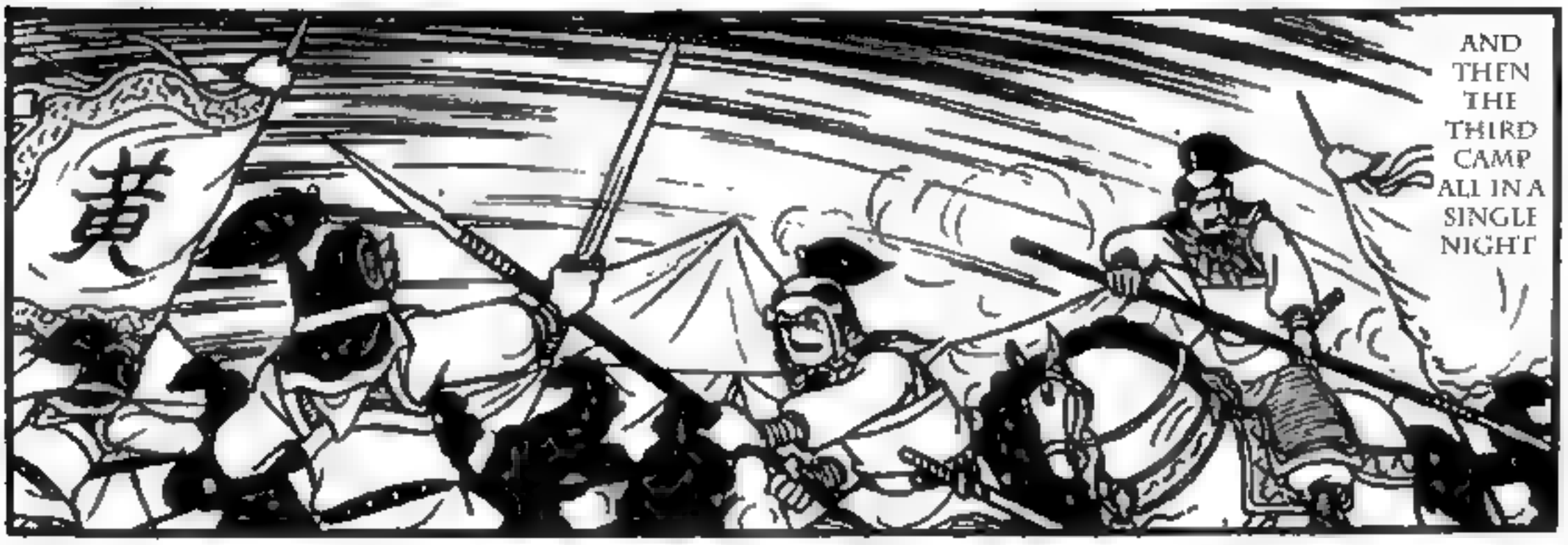
XIAHOU SHANG

COULD NOT EVEN FIND THEIR HORSES AMIDST THE PANIC AND CHAOS, AND HAD TO FLEE ON FOOT

CAPITALIZING ON THE ENEMIES DISORDERED FLIGHT,

HUANG ZHONG'S FORCES OVERRAN THE FIRST CAMP,

THE SECOND CAMP,


AND THEN THE THIRD CAMP ALL IN A SINGLE NIGHT

YES.
MENG DA. CARRY OFF ALL THESE GRAIN AND SUPPLIES BACK TO JIAMENG PASS. ONE CAN NEVER HAVE ENOUGH SUPPLIES IN WAR, AFTER ALL.
HMPH, THIS MUCH IS NOTHING. I'M AIMING FOR SOMETHING FAR GREATER.
THIS IS... QUITE THE HAUL, I MUST SAY.

AGAIN!? WE MUST GIVE THE TROOPS SOME TIME TO REST!

ALRIGHT THEN. THE REST OF US WILL GO ON THE PURSUIT AGAIN.

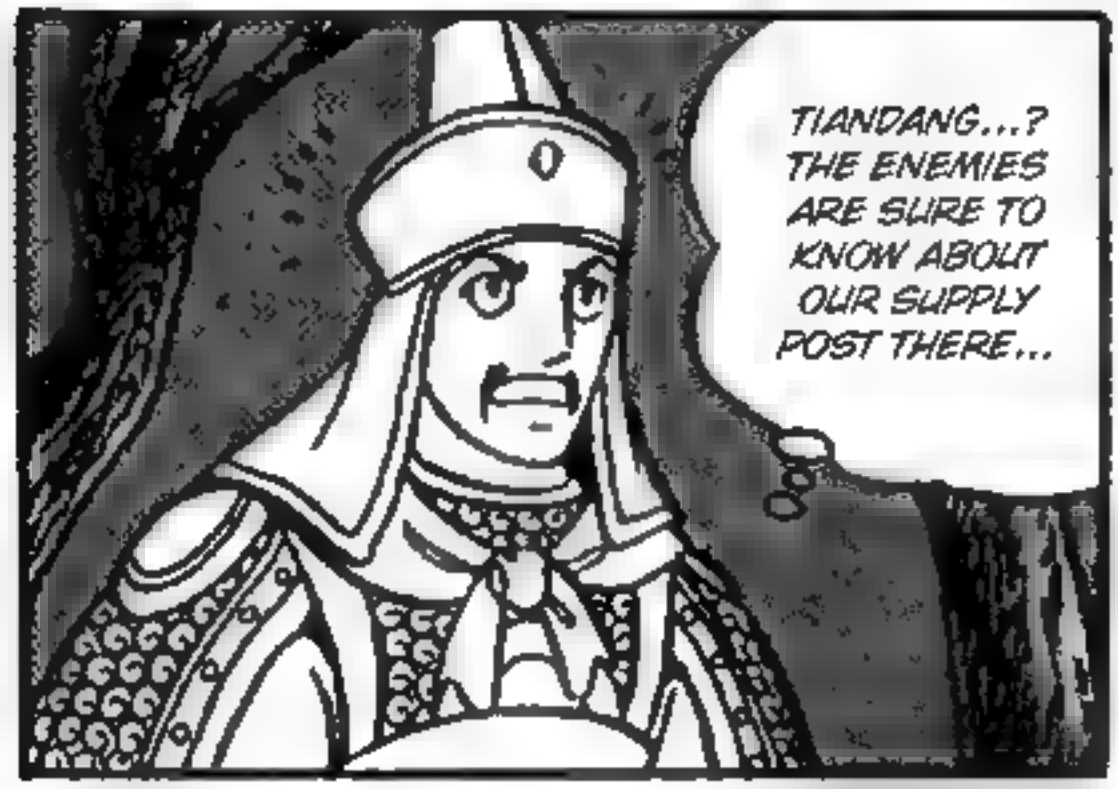
IT'S TIME TO MOVE OUT, MEN!

ONE CANNOT CATCH TIGER CUBS WITHOUT FIRST ENTERING THE TIGER'S DEN. REMEMBER THAT, LIU FENG.

HUANG ZHONG'S 5000 TROOPS SWIFTLY ADVANCED AGAIN.

MOST OF OUR ARMS AND ARMOUR HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY THE ENEMIES, THOUGH...

TREAT THE WOUNDED! ALL ABLE-BODIED TROOPS ARE TO STAND ON GUARD FOR PURSUING ENEMIES!


TIANDANG...? THE ENEMIES ARE SURE TO KNOW ABOUT OUR SUPPLY POST THERE...

WORRY NOT. WE CAN RESUPPLY FROM THE SUPPLY POST AT TIANDANG MOUNTAIN.

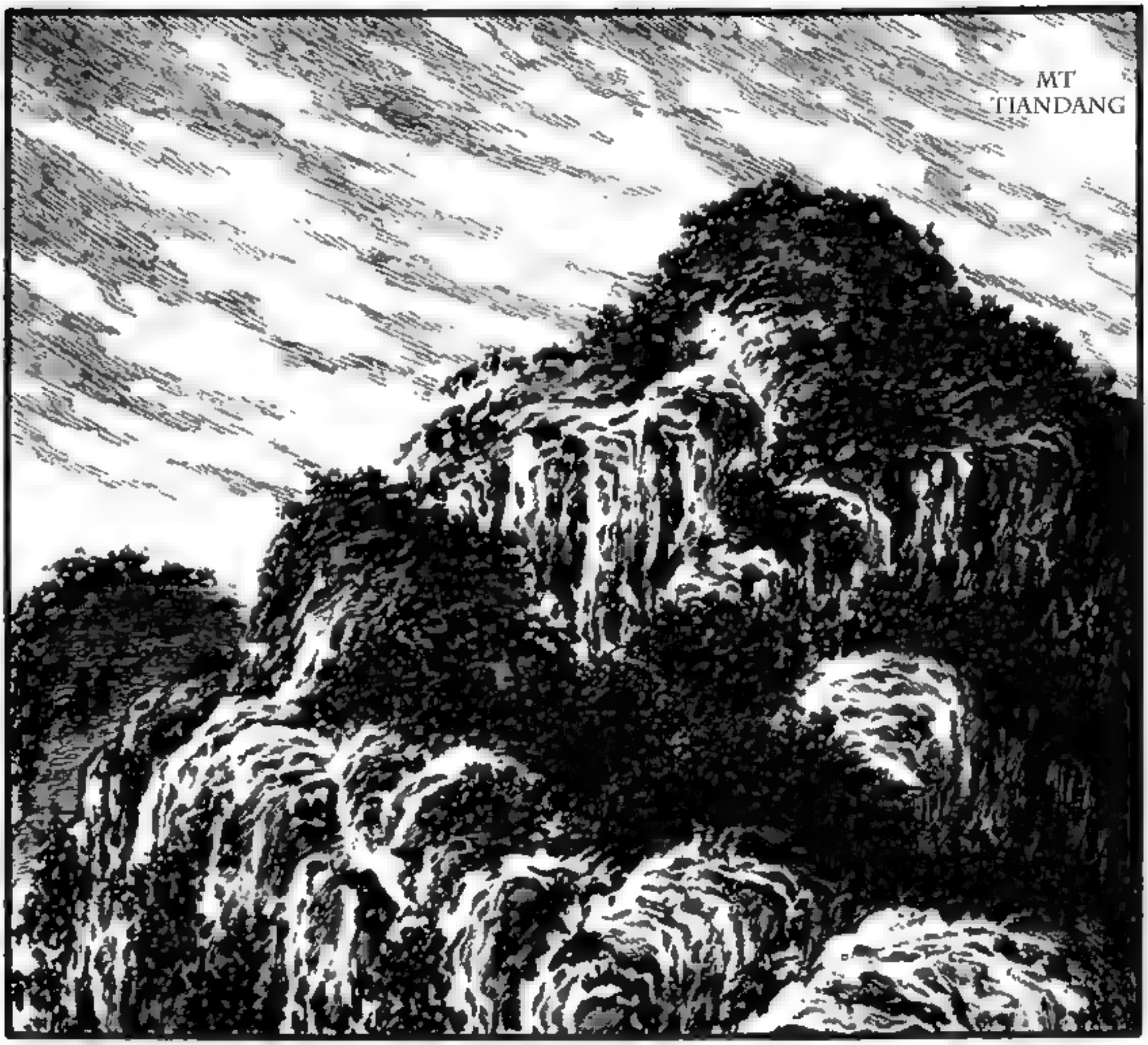
MY BROTHER, XIAHOU DE, IS IN CHARGE OF ITS DEFENSE WITH 100,000 TROOPS. AN ENEMY FORCE OF FIVE OR TEN THOUSAND HAS NO CHANCE OF CAPTURING IT.

XIAHOU SHANG. HANZHONG WILL BE IN DANGER IF THE ENEMIES CAPTURE THE SUPPLY POST AT TIANDANG. HOW RELIABLE ARE ITS DEFENSES RIGHT NOW?

ALRIGHT, MEN! OFF TO TIANDANG!

AGREED.

OUR BEST OPTION NOW IS TO RETREAT THERE AND REARM OUR FORCES.


MT
TIANDANG

REGRETTABLY SO. WE REQUIRE SOME OF YOUR TROOPS AND SUPPLIES SO WE CAN RECAPTURE OUR CAMPS.
WHAT!? YOU WERE ROUTED BY A NIGHT RAID FROM HUANG ZHONG!?

OBJECTION. I BELIEVE IT WOULD BE BEST TO FOCUS ON DEFENDING TIANDANG FOR THE TIME BEING.

SURE. I CAN CERTAINLY SPARE A DIVISION OF MY 100,000-STRONG ARMY HERE.

BUT...

SINCE WHEN DID YOU BECOME SUCH A COWARD!? HUANG ZHONG WAS ONLY LUCKY THAT HIS NIGHT RAID TOOK US BY SURPRISE! IN A FAIR FIGHT, HE'S NOTHING TO FEAR!

WHAT'S GOING ON!?

WHAT!?

SIR! HUANG ZHONG'S FORCES ARE ATTACKING!

YOU MUST NOT UNDERESTIMATE HIM! I KNOW FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE HE IS A WILY GENERAL!

ATTACKING WITH ONLY A FEW THOUSAND TROOPS? THAT SENILE OLD FOOL KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT THE ART OF WAR!

PRESSING ON THE ATTACK WHEN YOUR TROOPS ARE EXHAUSTED... WHAT BETTER SIGN IS THERE OF A MAN IGNORANT TO THE WAYS OF WAR THAN THAT??

EVEN IF THAT WERE SO, HIS TROOPS MUST BE TIRED FROM MARCHING ALL NIGHT LONG.

THANK YOU.

GRANTED!

GRANT ME 3000 SOLDIERS AND I WILL TAKE HIS HEAD, XIAHOU DE!

YES, SIR!
GIVE HAN HAO A SUIT OF ARMOUR AT ONCE!

HAN HAO BOLDLY LED 3000 TROOPS DOWN THE HILL TO ENGAGE HUANG ZHONG'S FORCES

I AM HERE, HAN HAO!

HUANG ZHONG!? WHERE ARE YOU!?

DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN TAKE MY HEAD WITH SUCH IMMATURE SKILLS?

I SHALL AVENGE MY BRO-THER'S DEATH!

WHAT!? HAN HAO WAS SLAIN!?
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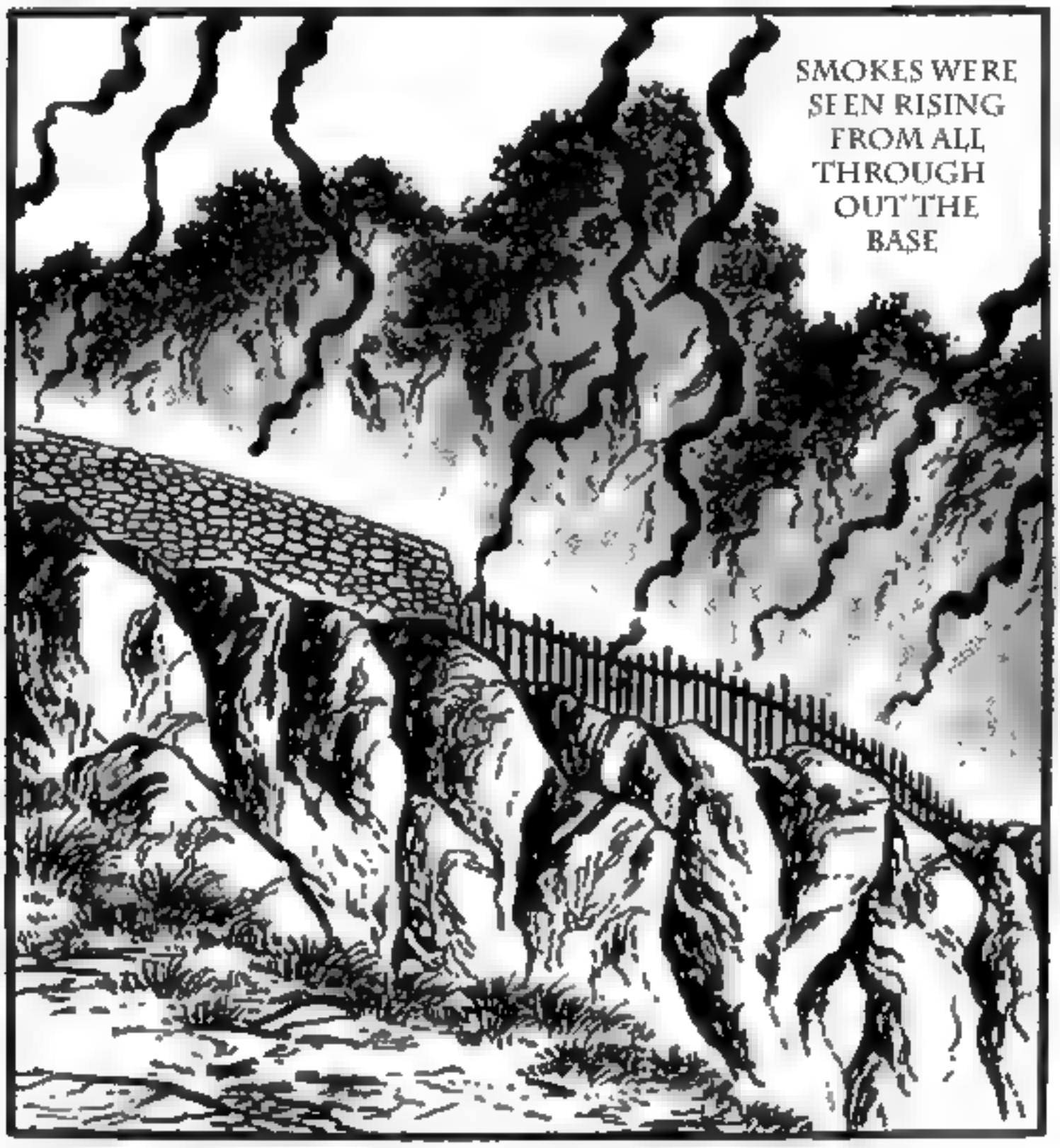
I, HUANG ZHONG, HAVE SLAIN HAN HAO!

DAMN THAT SENILE FART...

TAKE THAT OLD FOOL'S HEAD!


SMOKES WERE SEEN RISING FROM ALL THROUGH OUT THE BASE

JUST THEN, YELLS AND SHOUTS WERE HEARD FROM ALL OVER THE HILLS.

SIR! ENEMIES HAVE SHOWN UP ALL ACROSS THE HILLS AND HAVE LIT OUR BASE ON FIRE!

W-WHAT'S GOING ON!?

THEIR NUMBER IS UNKNOWN AT PRESENT.

H-HOW MANY DO THEY NUMBER!?

HM?

AND WHOM MIGHT YOU BE!?

ARE YOU THE ENEMY GENERAL?

SO IT WAS YOU WHO LIT MY BASE ON FIRE...

YAN YAN OF SHU!

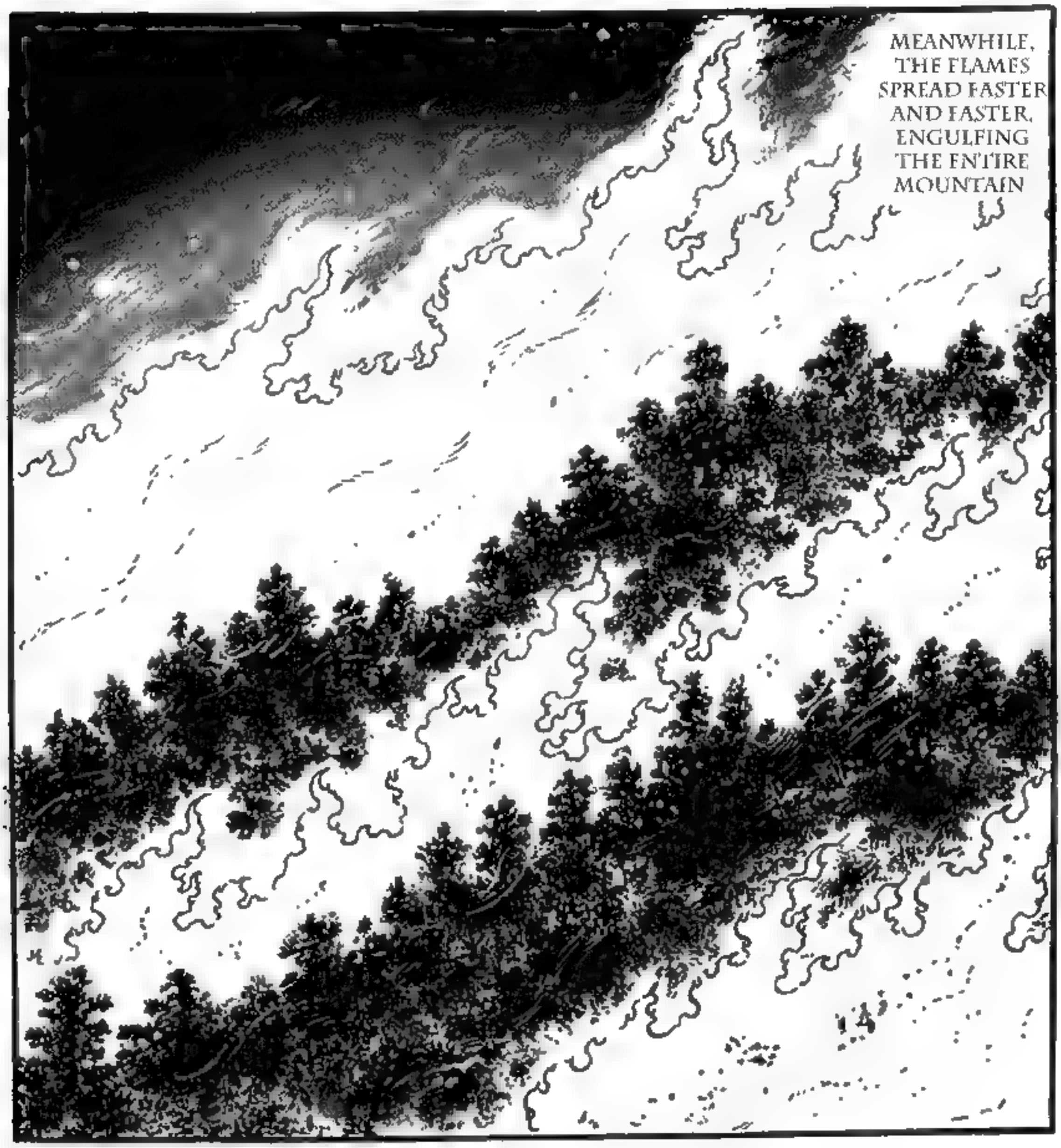
AN OLD MAN IS NO MATCH FOR XIAHOU DE!

THAT'S RIGHT. NOW SAY YOUR PRAYERS.

I, YAN YAN, HAVE TAKEN XIAHOU DE'S HEAD!

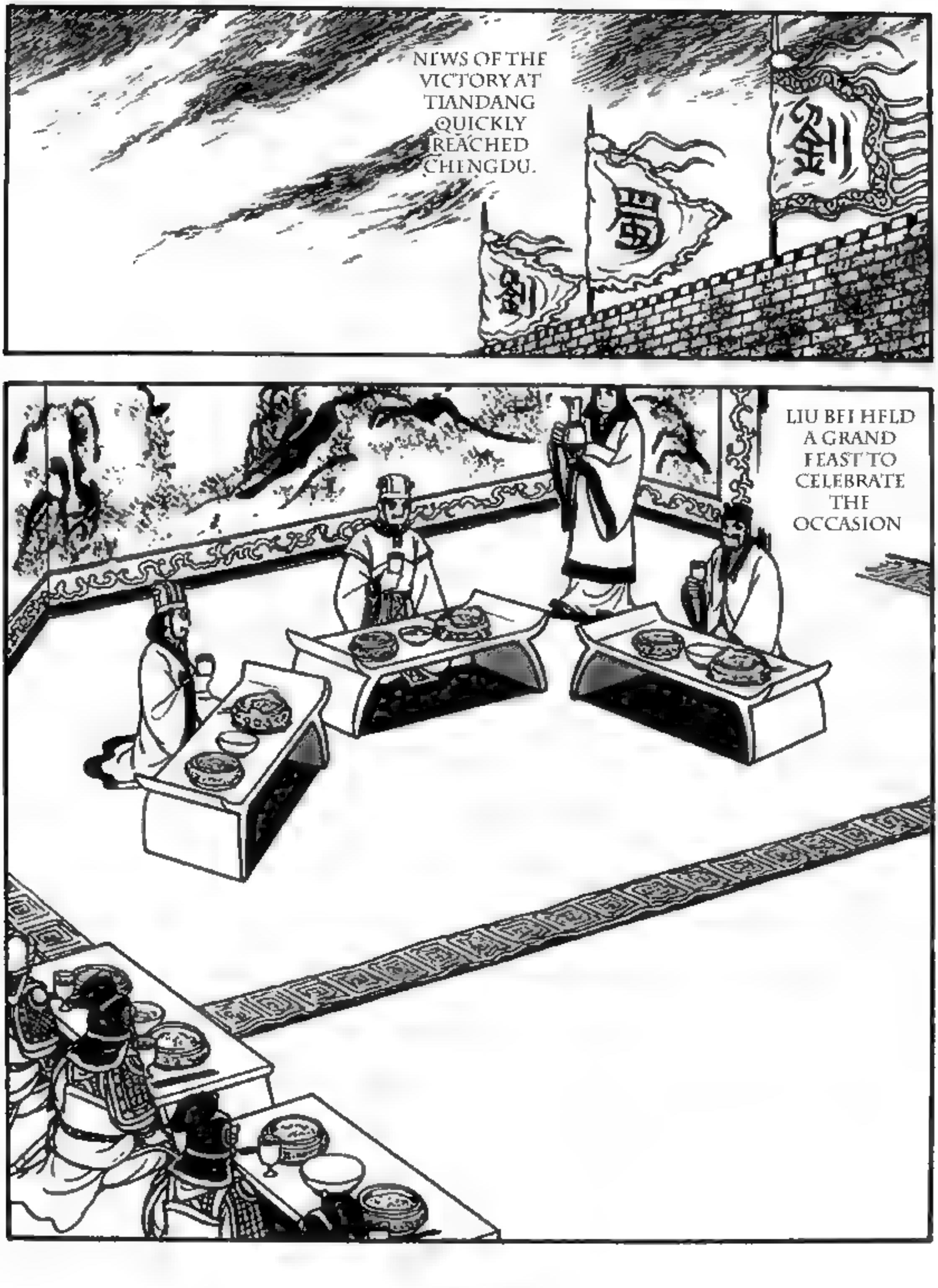
AHH!

WHAT?


MEANWHILE, THE FLAMES SPREAD FASTER AND FASTER, ENGULFING THE ENTIRE MOUNTAIN

THE WEI TROOPS HAD LOST TWO OF THEIR GENERALS AND WERE NOW SURROUNDED BY FLAMES
FIRE EVOKES PRIMAL FEAR IN THE HEARTS OF MEN. IT SPURRED THE WEI SOLDIERS TO ABANDON ALL THOUGHTS OF FIGHTING ALONG WITH THEIR BASE AT TIANDANG

MT. DINGJUN


NEWS OF THE VICTORY AT TIANDANG QUICKLY REACHED CHENGDU.
LIU BEI HELD A GRAND FEAST TO CELEBRATE THE OCCASION

IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, XIAHOU YUAN IS IN CHARGE OF THAT BASE.

I HEAR THE ENEMIES HAVE FLED TO THEIR BASE AT MT. DINGJUN.

NEVER THOUGHT THOSE OLD-TIMERS COULD ACTUALLY PULL IT OFF...!

MY LORD.

WITH TIANDANG TAKEN, A HANZHONG CONQUEST WON'T BE TOO DIFFICULT.

AFTER CAO CAO FORCED ZHANG LU OF HANZHONG TO SUBMIT TO HIS WILL, HE FAILED TO CARRY ON THE MOMENTUM AND ATTACK SHU.

YES, FA ZHENG?

HE THUS RESORTED TO ORDERING ZHANG HE, CAO HONG, AND XIAHOU YUAN TO STAY ON THE DEFENSE AND GUARD HANZHONG'S BORDERS.

OF COURSE, THAT WAS DUE IN PART TO OUR COAXING OF WU TO ATTACK HEFEI, BUT THE FACT REMAINS THAT CAO CAO HAD TO SPLIT HIS ARMY INTO TWO TO EVENLY DEAL WITH SHU AND WU.

THUS, NOW IS THE PERFECT CHANCE TO STRIKE HANZHONG.

AND WITH THE RECENT REVOLT AT XUCHANG, CAO CAO WON'T BE TOO KEEN ON MOVING FAR FROM THE CENTER OF HIS REALM.

I WHOLE-HEARTEDLY AGREE WITH FA ZHENG.

ANY OPINIONS ON THIS, KONGMING?

HM...

ZHANG HE NOR XIAHOU YUAN ARE GENERALS OF A HIGH ENOUGH CALIBRE TO STOP A FULL-SCALE INVASION INTO HANZHONG IF WE ARE TO ACT NOW.

VERY WELL.

IF HANZHONG IS ADDED TO YOUR REALM, YOU WILL HAVE ENOUGH MEN AND SUPPLIES TO STRIKE AT WEI'S HEARTLANDS AND BRING DOWN CAO CAO ONCE AND FOR ALL.

I HEREBY ORDER A FULL-SCALE INVASION OF HANZHONG, SO AS TO STOP CAO CAO'S IMPERIAL AMBITIONS AND RESTORE TRANQUILITY AND STABILITY TO THE EMPIRE.

ATTENTION, ALL OFFICERS!

7TH MONTH
OF THE 23RD
YEAR OF
REBUILT
TRANQUILITY
(218 A.D.)
AN ARMY OF
100,000
MARCHED
INTO
HANZHONG
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YOUR RECENT SUCCESSES WERE PHENOMENAL.

HUANG ZHONG AND YAN YAN, REPORTING TO YOUR CALL, MY LORD.

PLEASE ACCEPT THIS DEED OF YOUR NEW RANK AND TITLE.

AS SUCH, IT IS ONLY RIGHT THAT YOU ARE REWARDED.

NOW THEN, LET US DISCUSS THE MATTER OF THE ENEMY FORT AT MT. DINGJUN.

I AM HONOURED.

YES, THAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION.

I HEAR ZHANG HE AND XIAHOU SHANG FLED WITH THE REMNANTS OF THEIR FORCES TO DINGJUN TO MERGE WITH XIAHOU YUAN'S FORCES.

GLADLY!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A CRACK AT IT? CAPTURING IT WOULD OPEN THE ROAD ALL THE WAY TO YANGPING.

IT IS TRUE THAT HUANG ZHONG PERFORMED ADMIRABLY AT TIANDANG.

HOLD ON, MY LORD.

XIAHOU YUAN'S A FORMIDABLE GENERAL, WHICH IS WHY CAO CAO PLACED HIM IN CHARGE OF DEFENDING SUCH A KEY AREA.

WHAT!?

BUT HE'LL BE UP AGAINST A TOUGH MATCH THIS TIME.

MY LORD, I ADVISE CALLING GUAN YU UP FROM JINGZHOU AND HAVING HIM LEAD THE ATTACK ON DINGJUN.

YOU MAY HAVE OUTWITTED ZHANG HE, BUT ZHANG HE IS NO COMPARISON TO XIAHOU YUAN.

AFTER SUCH INSULTING REMARKS, I ABSOLUTELY REFUSE TO BACK DOWN NOW!

ARE YOU SAYING I AM INFERIOR TO XIAHOU YUAN!?

IF YOU MUST BE SO STUBBORN,

I WILL NOT LEAVE THIS TENT UNTIL YOU GIVE ME THE COMMAND, MY LORD.

HM...

FINE, I CAN AGREE TO THAT. JUST YOU WAIT. BEFORE LONG, I'LL BRING XIAHOU YUAN'S HEAD!

THEN I SHALL COMPLY, BUT ONLY ON THE CONDITION THAT YOU TAKE FA ZHENG ALONG AS YOUR ADVISOR. CONSULT HIS ADVICE FREQUENTLY, GENERAL.

THANK YOU.

VERY WELL, HUANG ZHONG. YOU HAVE THE COMMAND IN LEADING THE ATTACK ON DINGJUN.

YES, I DID. HUANG ZHONG SHOULD BE ABLE TO GAIN THE UPPER HAND IN THE COMING FIGHT.

KONGMING, DIDN'T YOU RECENTLY SAY THAT NEITHER ZHANG HE NOR XIAHOU YUAN POSED ANY REAL CONCERN?

BUT THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT MAY LEAD HIM TO UNDERESTIMATE HIS YOUNGER FOES.

HUANG ZHONG STILL POSSESSES STRENGTH ON PAR WITH MEN HALF HIS AGE.

THEN WHAT WAS ALL THAT JUST NOW FOR?

AH, UP TO YOUR USUAL TRICKS AGAIN, EH?

HE'S A HIGHLY RELIABLE GENERAL AS LONG WE PUT IN A FEW HARSH WORDS TO RECTIFY THAT POTENTIAL WEAKNESS.

YES?

ZHAO ZILONG.

YAN YAN.

YES.

SHADOW HUANG ZHONG'S FORCES AND ONLY PROVIDE AID WHEN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.

YES, SIR.

HEAD TO LANGZHONG AND SWITCH PLACES WITH ZHANG FEI AND WEI YAN THERE IN COMMANDING ITS GARRISON FORCES.

YES?

YES?

LIU FENG, MENG DA.

YES, SIR.

TAKE 3000 TROOPS EACH AND SET UP MANY FLAGS ALONG KEY POINTS IN THE HILLS SO AS TO GIVE THE ENEMY THE IMPRESSION THAT A LARGE AMOUNT OF OUR FORCES ARE ALREADY STATIONED THERE.

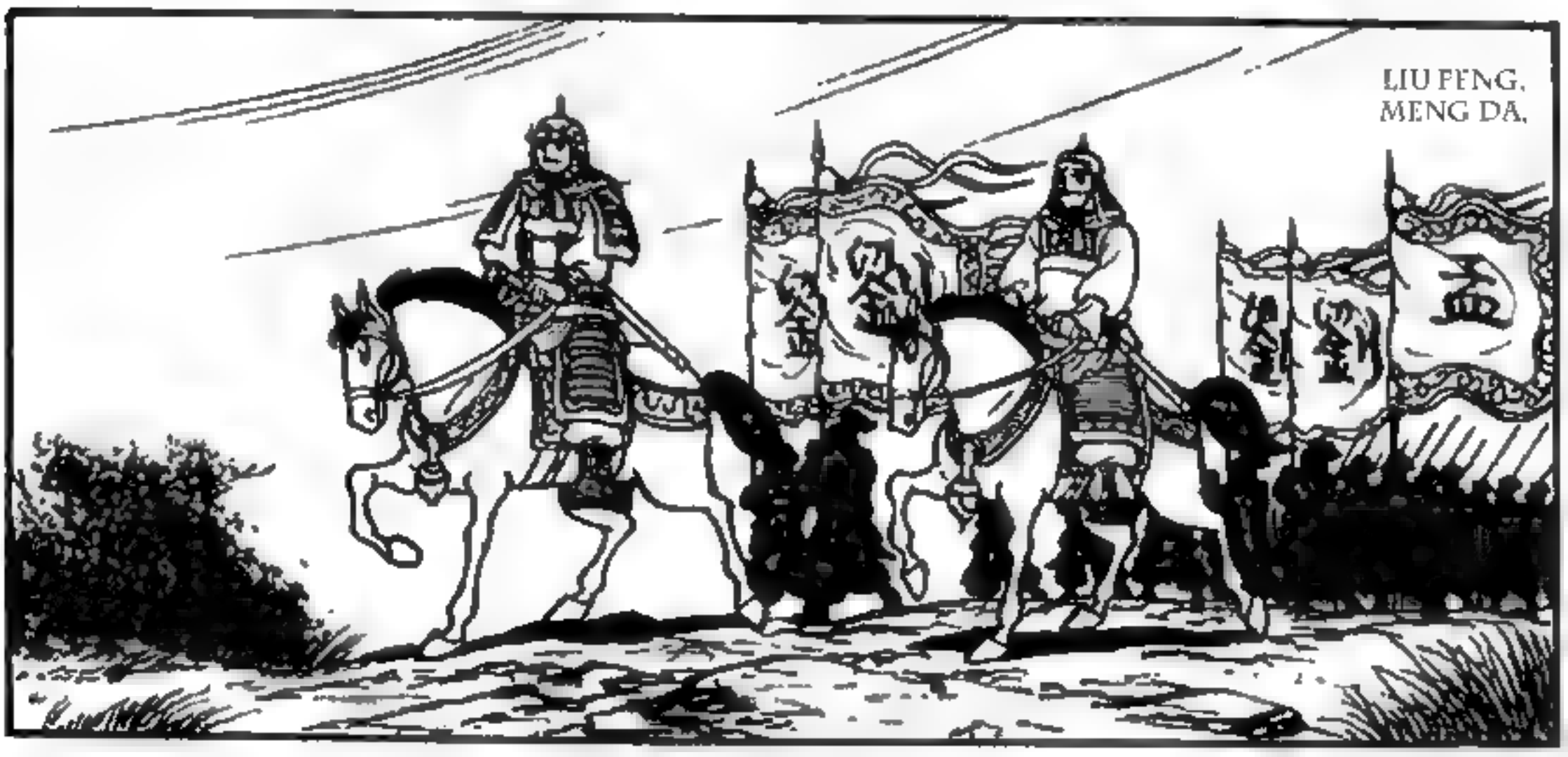
YES, SIR.

TAKE THIS LETTER TO MA CHAO AT XIABIAN QUICKLY.

LASTLY, WE NEED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH MA CHAO ABOUT OUR INVASION AS WELL...

SWIFTLY AND DEFTLY, KONGMING ORGANIZED THE GENERAL MOBILIZATION OF SHU'S 100,000 ARMY

HUANG
ZHONG.


LIU FENG.
MENG DA.

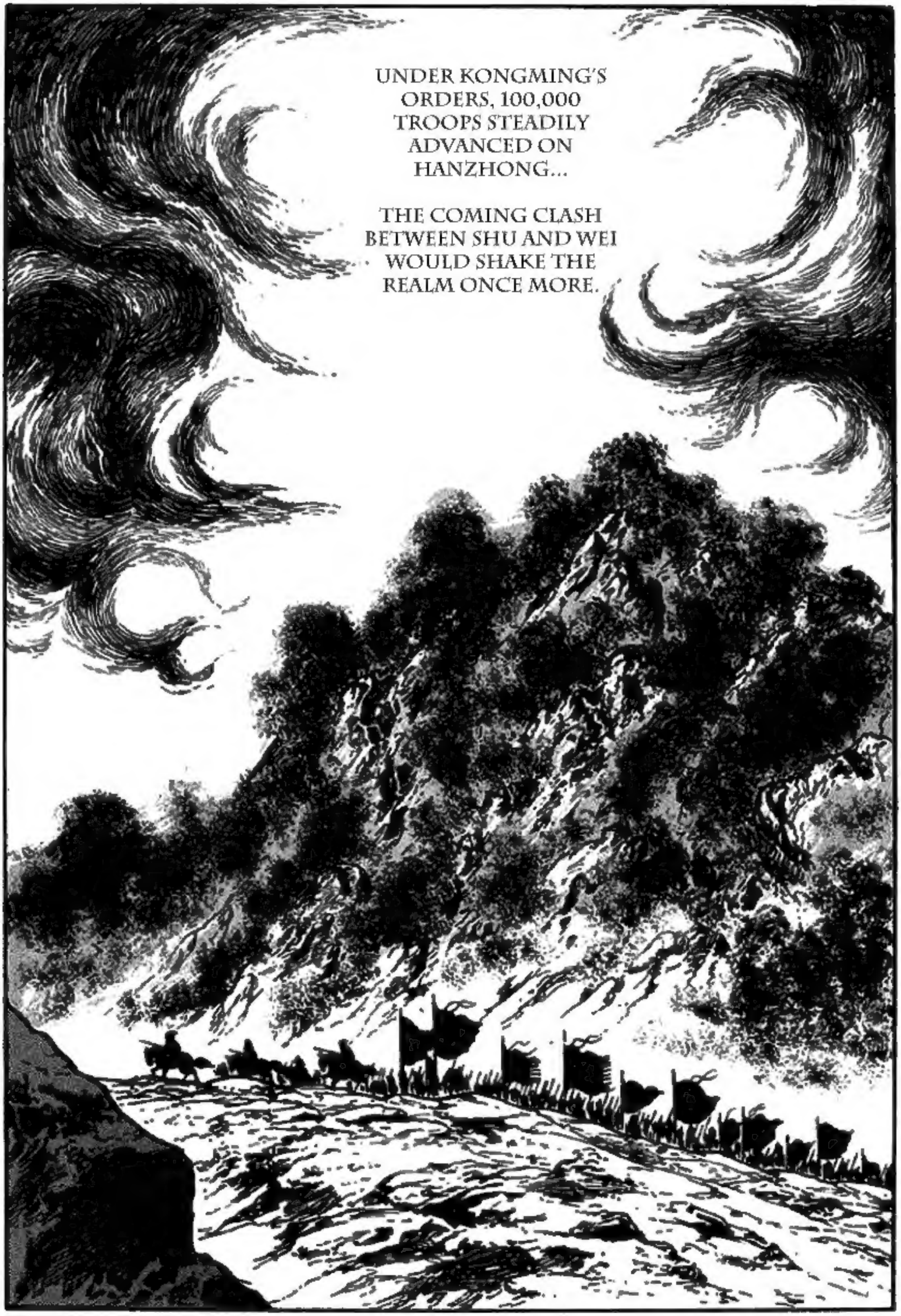
ZHANG FEI, AND
WEI YAN HEADED
INTO HANZHONG
TERRITORY ALONG
THREE ROUTES

MT. DINGJUN

YES, SIR!

WHAT!? AN ENEMY ARMY OF 100,000!?

WHICH MEANS SHU WILL AT LAST BECOME STRONG ENOUGH TO CONTEND WITH WEI SINGLE-HANDEDLY!
LIU BEI'S POWER WILL EASILY DOUBLE IF HE CONQUERS THE RICH LANDS OF HANZHONG...
YES, SIR!
ALERT CAO HONG AT NANZHENG IMMEDIATELY! WE MUST NOT LET THEM MAKE HEADWAY INTO HANZHONG!



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横山 光輝

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